

OURSTORIES:
A PASTORAL CARE & WELLNESS MINISTRY THAT FITS OUR
AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

By

CARMEN H. WALSTON

A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

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Abstract

By

Carmen H. Walston

A singer, Wintley Phipps, introduced the song, “It Is Well With My Soul,” by saying “It is in the quiet crucible of one’s personal, private sufferings that one’s noblest dreams and God’s greatest gifts are given in compensation to what you have been through.” The story of the song tugs at the heart. Behind the lyrics of this song is a portion of Mr. Horatio Spofford’s story—the tragic loss of his family. The inspiration was a gift from God that was used as a healing balm.

I have come to learn that by identifying and addressing the pain and then memorializing the event may be the first step in a journey to become emotionally and spiritually healed. The Lord revealed to me that my mission in life is to minister to those who are emotionally and spiritually broken and want to be healed. This process would begin by my witness through God’s grace and faith that wholeness can emerge.

While the painful experiences of life may never be completely resolved on this side of eternity, I’ve learned that it is a part of the journey. Another part of the journey is healing and restoration. Therefore, I make this attempt to develop a means to minister to others through education and the twelve-step program of recovery to become “emotionally mature” and “spiritually healthy” by telling our personal stories of achievements and tragedies through our life stories.

The original project team started as members of the Calvary-Fellowship A.M.E. Church, grew to include community members, and finally resulted in a combination of community members and church members.

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CHAPTER 1

TO RECOGNIZE OUR BROKENNESS

The Calvary-Fellowship A.M.E. Church in the Bedford-Stuyvesant Community

The African Methodist Episcopal Church denomination has an extremely interesting past which stems from the roots of racial discrimination. It is the only denomination which evolved from a social challenge and not a religious one.¹

In November 1787, the colored people belonging to the Methodist society in Philadelphia convened together in order to take into consideration the evils under which they labor, arising from the unkind treatment by their white brethren, who considered them a nuisance in the house of worship, and even pulled them off their knees while in the act of prayer and ordered them to the back seats. For these and various other acts of unchristian conduct, they considered it their duty to devise a plan in order to build a house of their own in which they could worship God under their own vine and fig tree. They met with great opposition from an elder of the Methodist Church. Because of this, the founders of the society resigned from the Methodist society and began to seek support elsewhere.²

In 1793, the number of serious people of color had increased and there were different opinions with respect to the mode of religious worship. Many of the new outcasts felt a strong partiality for the (a) order of service, (b) structure and (c) organization by the Methodists. Richard Allen, with the advice of some of his brethren, proposed erecting a place of worship, on his own ground and at his own expense, as an

¹ African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church: With an Appendix* (Charlotte, NC: A.M.E. Zion Publishing House, 2008), 3.

² Ibid., 3-4.

African Methodist meeting house.”³ While the African Methodist Church originated in Philadelphia; it has grown to become an international church.

Global challenges have its place in the local churches; however, the focus of our attention is one of Brooklyn’s fastest growing communities: Bedford Stuyvesant. The origins of the church started with an outcry of the people of a faith-based organization to become racially and socially liberated. The need still persists today. We are broken, but we must adapt to the world and the situations as they are presented. We, as flexible beings have the ability to adjust because we know that the situations will not be perfectly fixed; but we can adapt our thinking to use what we can and leave the rest.

In her article, “Bed Stuy’s (Unfinished) Revival,” Kay Hymowitz stated, “Of all the changes that I’ve witnessed in Brooklyn since settling there thirty years ago, none has surprised me more than the blooming reputation of Bedford-Stuyvesant, now the fastest growing neighborhood in New York’s fastest growing borough.”⁴ Bedford-Stuyvesant, better known as Bed-Stuy, is a community in transition that has lived up to its nickname, “Bed-Stuy-Do or Die.”

Currently, Bed-Stuy has become the home for young professionals and creative whites in search of brownstones, tree-lines streets and express subway lines to Manhattan. Duke Ellington’s, “Take the A Train”⁵ sets to music the trip from Manhattan to Brooklyn, a route that has been used to transport individuals and families to a new-found way of life, and a new-found freedom.

³ A. M. E. Z. Church, *Doctrines and Discipline*, 3-4.

⁴ Kay Hymowitz, “Bed Stuy’s (Unfinished) Revival,” *City Journal*, Summer 2013, http://www.city-journal.org/2013/23_3_bed-stuy.html (accessed February 5, 2015).

⁵ Duke Ellington, “Take the A Train,” by Billy Strayhorn (New York: Bluebird, 1941).

Ms. Hymowitz further states that in the last six years, since 2008, new cafes, restaurants, bakeries, boutiques, galleries and wine bars have sprung up in the area. For decades, it has been a cultural center for Brooklyn's African American population. Brooklyn (and in particular, Bedford Stuyvesant) has become affectionately known as the Borough of Churches. With the migration of Blacks to Brooklyn, these individuals brought their faith in a God of their understanding with them. It was in the early 1920s and 1930s when African-Americans began to migrate to Bed-Stuy. The first refugees were from the Jim Crow South and the Great Migration. African-Americans from Harlem who were looking for better housing and jobs began to migrate to Brooklyn, specifically after the A train started service in 1930.⁶

Bed-Stuy is located in the middle of Brooklyn with Williamsburg to the north; Crown Heights to the south; Bushwick to the east; and Clinton Hill and Fort Greene to the west. So taking the "A" train into Brooklyn, we will eventually arrive at Utica Avenue. We have taken the underground subway and have exited onto Fulton Street and Utica Avenue. We will walk two blocks west to Rochester until we reach Herkimer and there we will see Calvary-Fellowship A.M.E. Church.

The white church on the corner of Herkimer Street and Rochester Avenue looks like a traditional country church; and thus, appears misplaced in the urban, Bedford-Stuyvesant community of Brooklyn. The church has a steeple and is surrounded by a newly painted wrought iron fence. The small piece of land that stretches from the community garden to the back of the church is spotted with trampled bits of grass; but mostly the soil is exposed as the lot is used as a parking lot. When it rains, pools of mud are created. If one is not careful, the entire foot can sink into the mud.

⁶ Hymowitz, "Bed Stuy's (Unfinished) Revival."

The marquee at the front of the church, which identifies the preacher for Sunday, pastor of the church, presiding elder of the area and the conference bishop is one consisting of individual letters put together to advertise the activities of the church. It is not colorful or digital. When driving or walking by, one might certainly miss the information posted on it.

Calvary-Fellowship is one of three A.M.E. churches in the immediate Bedford Stuyvesant area. At one time the churches were full, having a number of services to accommodate the neighborhood populations of families.

For decades, Bedford Stuyvesant has been a cultural center for Brooklyn's black population.⁷ The setting and culture of this church represents the neighborhood of the past with congregants waiting for the future to happen to them. However, there is an element missing as the congregation moves toward the 21st century church. Those who come to the church, come because there is a need that is not being fulfilled in their lives. Some come to the church, as a last resort, to see the pastor and to have the pastor, or any available minister fix whatever is wrong.

Edward P. Wimberly states in his book, *Pastoral Care in the Black Church* that the definition of pastoral care must be re-examined and must be given a clear definition of the functions of pastoral care.⁸ Congregants and non-congregants alike, come to church to have a need met. If that need cannot be satisfied, the people don't come. If we,

⁷ Matias Echanove, "Bed Stuy, On the Move" (master's thesis, Columbia University, 2003), 30, <http://community-wealth.org/content/bed-stuy-move-demographic-trends-economic-development-heart-brooklyn-master-thesis-advisor> (accessed February 6, 2015).

⁸ Edward P. Wimberly, *Pastoral Care in the Black Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 18.

the ministers think we are providing pastoral care, and no one is coming, then the question is: What are we providing?

The older parishioners of the church are afraid that their family's congregational roots will be lost as family members die and the children move away. On major church events, sometimes these sons and daughters return in support of their parents and grandparents. Many returning adult children report that they grew up in Calvary, have fond memories of childhood activities and now have joined other churches.

Community members see the traditional church building, hear the rocking music, walk in and attempt to become a part of whatever is going on. The new attendees come to the church expecting to feel wanted and natured. They are looking for a quick fix: a healing—mental, physical or emotional; maybe even spiritual. This experience is something that they felt previously and they want to regain; or the feeling is something that is missing. If the persons do not gain satisfaction to the feelings or to the relief of the pain that they are experiencing, they will leave. In searching for the answer to life's dilemmas, if there is some relief to be had, surely, it can be found within the walls of the church building—at least this is where my ancestors said to come, if I have a problem.

However, if this cannot be accomplished, those persons longing to find a way to go through the immediate crisis will give the church and its occupants a try. These hurting people may also look to establish, or re-establish a relationship with God and with other persons.⁹

“Pastoral caregivers represent a God who is aligned “against the forces of future-less-ness.” Despair can be seen as an enemy, and pastoral caregivers bring their

⁹ Wimberly, *Pastoral Care*, 18-19.

knowledge and skills into combat against it.”¹⁰ Andrew D. Lester also states that parishioners see the pastor as “a hope” based on the promises of God. “A new future is always available and that numerous possibilities exist in every present circumstance.”¹¹ Congregants and community members come with stories that they want heard. They grab the visible minister, or anyone who looks like a minister who will listen, to receive a glimmer of hope for the future, a blessing or advice. There is not enough time after the worship service or enough privacy to address those needs on Sundays.

The church has volumes of stories and testimonies that yearn to be heard. In all fairness, the senior pastor and other ministers cannot handle all the personal accounts and effectively teach and preach the Word of God. Therefore, this demonstration project will establish a model of a “pastoral care ministry” that allows the community person to tell their story in a safe place and achieve a sense of peace and healing to their beings.

¹⁰ Andrew D. Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 2.

¹¹ Ibid., 2-3.

CHAPTER 2

TO BIRTH THE FAITH WITHIN US

There is always a story. As a Christian and a minister in a denominational church, I am actively involved with my spiritual and biblical growth and am also concerned with those to whom I minister. I desire to experience a personal and satisfying relationship with the God of my understanding; and through discussions with other members of the congregation, I understand that they, too, are looking for similar things, for healing and comfort.

I propose a plan be put in place to address the needs of the congregants. Why not amend a program to suit the needs of the people in a self-help program that has been proven successful.

Another realization is that many persons, men and women outside of the church want to talk with a minister, and tell their stories about personal experiences of despair, hopelessness, fear, death and loss, anger, rejection, and depression; drug and alcohol addictions; the betrayal of a spouse/significant other; or the abandonment of parents. However, they may not want to come to a church service, but they want the benefit of one who appears to have a relationship with a higher power and who in the eyes of the beholder is somewhat successful. And successful does not mean rich; it may mean that the appearance of the person is peaceful, calm, without hurt and anger.

There is always a story. Many times there is a desperate or dramatic story and a real desire to “find” God in the tragedy. The questions are: Why did God let this happen or when is God going to fix it? For example, there is the story of pastoral care concerning the Smith family.

Pastoral care can be defined, as Howard Clinebell states: “As a broad, inclusive ministry of mutual healing and growth within a congregation and its community, through the life cycle.”¹² Ms. Smith is a fifty-plus, working grandmother who is raising her eighteen year old grandson. Sam is a member of a gang. They live in the project houses located diagonally across the street from the Calvary-Fellowship A. M. E. Church.

One day, in early September 2009, school was in session. There was a new principal and several new administrators at the Boys and Girls High School. Sam spent his first day back in this neighborhood high school. He had dropped out and made a decision to return to continue and complete his high school education. After school, Mrs. Smith’s grandson, Sam began his walk home. On the way, he had to pass the “circle”—a mini-mall located on Fulton Street, in Bedford Stuyvesant, not far from the school. This is a place where many students would congregate while waiting for the number 46 bus which runs up and down, north and south, on Utica Avenue. There are also one or two bodegas at which the community can buy sandwiches, sodas, chips and the like. Therefore, it is a popular with the young people.

It is reported that Sam became involved in a verbal altercation with some members of a rival gang. The story goes that he ran away, probably because he was by himself. Sam ran west on Fulton Street and turned onto Rochester Avenue. One of the

¹² Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 27.

rival gang members caught up to him and that person shot Sam in the back. Sam fell on the street, approximately fifty feet away from the front door of his building, mortally wounded. The church building was closed on that day and witnessed the tragedy in silence; however, our eventual response was forthcoming to the community.

This minister of Calvary-Fellowship Church, and also a then-administrator on the Boys and Girls Faculty, wore two hats during this life experience. We served the community in the traditional way. We served the family in a more personal way. We offered the use of the sanctuary and held the services at the church. We offered grief counseling to the family; and played as a liaison between the family and the school. We did not recognize Sam or his family as members or visitors of the church. We offered community prayer, shoulders to cry upon, and listening ears. The funeral was attended by most of the administrators of the school, the family, the deceased's gang associates, and the community at large. As this was a gang-related homicide, the New York City Police Department had officers assigned to patrol the blocks around the church for our protection and crowd control.

For the next three years, on the anniversary of Sam's death, at the family's request, a memorial service was held in the sanctuary. Grandmother Smith raised money from the family, church community and friends and turned the funds into two scholarships. She contributed the money that was raised to Boys and Girls High School to two students—a male and a female—who were successful in turning their lives around and completing their high school education. Our sense of loss comes from cataclysmic

events that happen about and in the community. In a situation like this, we normally give permission and a place for people to grieve—at least for a season.¹³

In my training as a Christian minister, I listened and referenced scriptures to which the “counselor” could often refer. Sister Smith had my attention each time that she entered the church. This was an unstated commitment that I made. Grandmother Smith eventually brought her younger grandson, Sam’s brother to church; however, he did not attend after this initial contact. “The sad truth is that there is little difference between God’s people inside the church and those outside the church who claim no relationship to Jesus Christ.”¹⁴ Grandmother Smith still attends periodically. She has since moved away from the immediate neighborhood and attends on specific church-related events.

Therefore, some are healed from the damaged emotions and thus their outlook on life changes because their mindset changes. The challenge is to share our experiences and develop our characters so that there is a foundation on which to build emotional stability and a reliance on our spiritual nature.

Hurts do heal. While Mrs. Smith is moving on in her healing process, we are satisfied that she received the help and the comfort that she was looking for in the organized church and her biological family. The pain of loss: a loved one, a relationship, an employment situation can be healed by a one-on-one therapeutic intervention. While this situation seemed a little extraordinary in terms of time, the following situation that influenced our thinking to pursue a different form of pastoral care.

¹³ Peter Scazzero and Warren Bird, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship that Actually Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 154.

¹⁴ Scazzero and Bird, *Emotionally Healthy Church*, 17.

Calvary-Fellowship is a church that combined two congregations: Calvary, which was comprised largely of senior citizens and retired individuals who were long-standing members of Calvary and who were set in their ways; and Fellowship Temple, a small congregation which had members who were still in the work force and who tithed to Fellowship Temple, but had no formal building in which to worship. Fellowship Temple worshipped on the campus of the Pratt Institute in the chapel. The two congregations merged and became a congregation of approximately ninety persons.

The former Calvary church had a soup kitchen which served an average of 60 meals to members of the community, one day per week. Over time the soup kitchen remained functional and the number of meals served grew to over 200 meals served one day per week. On one Tuesday, the normal serving day, there was a female client who had words with one of the female volunteer church members. Words were exchanged and the client reached to hit the church volunteer. A second female volunteer interceded and prevented the client from landing the punch. Other community members also prevented the two women from interacting with each other. When the client was let go, somehow she turned a serving tray and rack over spilling the food and the hot water contained in the supporting tray. The hot water scalded the second volunteer on her back.

Each person involved played a role in this drama and decided to respond in a particular way. The pastor of the church decided that as church members, Christians, we should allow our “lights to shine” and demonstrate behavior that represents the Christian life. Therefore, he decided that an “emotional support group” should be formed. This would be a program-in-place where church members and community members could share life’s concerns and explore ways in which to resolve life’s differences and explore

the reasons why we do the things that we do. This model will give a voice, however, small, to emotionally wounded people to begin the healing process and enforce their knowledge of a God of their understanding and their spiritual maturity.

Knowingly or unknowingly, the pastor embraced two points of Howard Clinebell's Holistic-Liberation-Growth Model.

Pastoral care must liberate itself from its dominant middle-class, white, male orientation and become more inclusive in its understanding . . .
Pastoral care and counseling should utilize the unique professional identity and role of ministers, including their positive authority and the socially defined expectation that they will take the initiative in actively reaching out to offer help to those who need care and counseling . . . and the idea that pastoral care can and should occur in all the diverse functions of ministry including preaching, worship and social action.¹⁵

"For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Philippians 2:13).

¹⁵ Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling*, 26-28.

CHAPTER 3 LET GO AND LET GOD

History of the implementation of the project

The pastor and I were assigned to Calvary-Fellowship A.M.E. in June 2005. It took at least three years to become accustomed to the congregation; and that long for the congregation to become accustomed to the newly appointed pastor and minister. The congregation was hurting from the treatment of the former administration and they were left in excessive debt. Apparently, the congregants were not given a voice, their ideas and comments were not heard.

In 2008, I was admitted into the Doctoral Program at New York Theological Seminary. In the next two years, we experienced the congregants and their personalities. It was during this time between 2009 and 2010 when the pastor suggested that I start a group that would meet the emotional and spiritual needs of the congregants. The pastor and I agreed that some of the congregants would benefit from talking out their concerns: identifying the problem and giving general guidance on a method to relieve the problem. We normally prescribed prayer and scripture study.

The pastor asked a woman, who was a member of another church and who had counseling credentials, to come on board and provide pastoral care for our congregants. She was given office hours on Saturdays, in the boardroom and no one attended. After four consecutive Saturdays, we mutually agreed to stop this counseling session. This

particular ministry was advertised by word of mouth and notice was placed in Sunday's bulletins, but to no avail.

Awareness Rising

We wanted to provide a ministry of care and comfort. We desired to address the people in a non-judgmental way. The incident in the Soup Kitchen was the perfect catalyst to provide awareness that a type of behavioral tool was needed to avert the type of response which was exhibited on that Tuesday between one of our members and a community person.

We did not attempt to counsel the client, but we did address our congregant who was a volunteer. The pastor and I agreed to speak to our congregant concerning the physical display of her angry emotions. We thought the situation was resolved. However, in our Bible Study were asked, "What can we do/learn during the Bible Study session, to offer additional tools in handling our emotions?" We decided that that we would look at a passage in the Bible where it is documented that Jesus healed a person from a non-physical ailment. We decided upon Luke 8:2.

As I was in this doctoral program, I intended to use this scripture to demonstrate that Mary of Magdalene was delivered from "seven devils." I proposed to show that although the seven devils were not identified in the text, that we could consider the devils as the "seven deadly sins." My premise was that emotions are neither good nor bad; but it is our response to the feeling that results in the good or bad behavior. For example, we can feel anger; however, if we react violently, especially toward another individual, then we can classify the behavior as negative. With the proper tools, we all can handle our emotions, our behaviors and not allow our emotions to handle us.

We scheduled the study to occur for four consecutive weeks and we decided upon four of the “deadly sins”: wrath; sloth (as we were not certain of the meaning!); lust; and pride. We had great sessions. We used clips from the History Channel entitled “The Seven Deadly Sins.” We were able to define the “sins;” and agree that they are not listed in the Bible as such; however, we did discover that the Bible has a list of “deadly sins” which can be found in the New Testament:

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witch craft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies and the like. I warn you (says Paul) as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21 NIV).

The result of this workshop was informative. But it did not produce the desired results: awareness that sharing emotions would help with our responses to negative situations. We were not able to develop the tools necessary to avert the negative reaction to an experienced emotion.

The Birth of the Idea

As the speaker finished sharing his experience, strength and hope, we applauded to show our appreciation, stood up and formed a circle by holding hands around the room and recited the following:

God grant me the serenity to accept the things that I cannot change,
courage to change the things that I can and the wisdom to know the
difference (Reinhold Niebuhr).

As the meeting closed, I continued to reflect on how I could create a pastoral care ministry that would be acceptable to the community and will be accepted by the organized church body.

After “having a spiritual awakening as a result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.” The answer is

inside of me. As a part of my story, I am a recovering alcoholic and my recovery process includes the Twelve Step Program. It also includes counseling, one-on-one sessions, group meetings, and a belief in a power greater than myself that could and would restore me to sanity. In my life, this simple strategy of talking out my problem to someone who is non-judgmental has worked; as it has for many persons who have attended A.A. meetings on a regular basis over the past seventy-five years. By attending meetings and following the Twelve Steps, the program has helped me over the past thirty-one years in that I have not had a drink, a drug or any mood-altering substance.

I approached the pastor and together we first agreed upon a group that meets once a month for emotional support. We further agreed that I would not have to break my anonymity. And I would use my experience gained from the program to start a group focusing its primary purpose of recovery from “damaged emotions” and a renewed relationship with the God of our understanding. We would use a book entitled, *The Twelve Steps: A Spiritual Journey; a Working Guide for Healing Damaged Emotions* as our text.

The first goal of the project was to develop awareness in Calvary Fellowship Church that changes can occur in one’s faith, development, spiritual awareness, insight, sensitivity and greater self-acceptance when a person self-disclosed his/her challenged life experiences.

During the Lenten season of 2014, we took the opportunity to present a workshop on counseling, by using selected portions of the Mel Gibson production of *Passion of the Christ*. We designed the Fellowship Hall in a way where there was one long table with six settings on each side of the table. We read and referred to Matthew 26:20-30 which

speaks of Jesus and the last supper. We read the scripture and discussed it. We sat at the table and were served bread and grape juice to replicate the last supper. We moved on and addressed the verses that covered Jesus agonizing in the garden. Our discussion moved toward Judas and his act of betrayal.

When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins. To the chief priests and the elders “I have sinned,” he said, “For I have betrayed innocent blood.” “What is that to us?” they replied. “That’s your responsibility.” So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself” (Matthew 27: 3-5 NIV).

We posed the question: How would a concerned person counsel Judas in order to alleviate his depression? What, given the opportunity, could we do or say to relieve his hopelessness and despair? I’ve asked one volunteer, E.D. (and member of my Site Team) to share her response to this question and she wrote the following:

She first defined the situations: i.e., “depression, hopelessness and despair.”

- **Depression** – a psychoneurotic or psychotic disorder marked by sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentration and feelings of dejection,
- **Hopelessness** – having no expectation of good or success, despairing, desperate,
- **Despair** – to lose all hope or confidence.

She related the definitions to Psalm 143, which was on her heart:

As I read this Psalm I thought about the question. Judas was in great despair more than depression. He did not know what to do or where to go. I think despair is harder to overcome than depression. Despair is when you are about to let go of the rope and you think God is not there. Even though he had Jesus [at the ready] he could not go to him. He could not tell any of the other disciples, so he had no one. There was never any mention of other family members, so he was alone.

“I would council him by simply starting a conversation with him. I would ask the usual questions—How are you? Did anything out of the ordinary trouble you today? What can I do to help? What are your plans for the rest of the day? After listening, I would then try to direct him to a solution. Once the mind is deflected off the problem at hand then counseling can begin. Judas was about to take an extreme step, one he did not need to take. He thought he was doing something good but it turned out to be the worst move he ever made.” – Site Team Member and Volunteer

We must be made aware that there are times where people need to be heard. There may be times where they should be counseled. So, how do we counsel? According to Burrell D. Dinkins, “The problem is not the person; the problem is the problem.”¹⁶ Therefore it is my responsibility to teach that the problem and the person are two different things. We must release the notion that the person is the problem. If the person is removed, as in Judas’ case, the problem still persists.

If we could get to Judas before he commits suicide, we may be able to identify one of the problems at hand. Judas may feel guilt. In the church community, we may not be in a position to solve the problem; but we can develop an awareness that situations exist that require an intervention by an empathetic ear. How can we listen and help Judas to overcome his guilt before he makes the ultimate act of taking his own life.

The second goal was to recruit five to seven community members and/or congregants of the sample group to participate in the oral/verbal telling of their personal stories; and through group discussion, disclose how “telling their stories” has had an effect on their lives. In the course of the six months of implementation I requested

¹⁶ Burrell David Dinkins, *Narrative Pastoral Counseling* ([Longwood, FL]: Xulon Press, 2005), 46.

seven community volunteers, who are familiar with the Twelve Step program to share their stories with an emphasis on healing through knowledge of the Program and how it helped them to make a connection with the God of their understanding.

In fulfillment of Goal 2, I recruited a number of volunteers to write or journal their stories. Five other volunteers have not submitted their stories. However, this made the case for me that this project was doable. We would use the Twelve Step Program as the bases of a therapeutic community. Instead of using the Steps as a tool for recovery from alcohol, we would use the Steps as a tool to recover those damaged emotions that we are willing to face. A sample of “Their Stories” can be found in Chapter 7.

Therefore, we named the group: The Emotional Support Group and made another attempt of advertising in the church bulletin. “The Emotional Support Group will meet on a Saturday in the Fellowship Hall.” Rev. Carmen – Facilitator. We constructed flyers (see Appendix B). And we distributed the flyers within the church and then ultimately to non-members in the community.

We advertised by flyers and now we have a member to text-blast a meeting reminder on the Mondays before the meetings will be held. We also created a brochure which lists the future scheduled meetings and general information about the group.

We established that the meeting dates would be every second and fourth Saturday of each month, unless it conflicted with an activity on the Church’s calendar; then the dates would be adjusted to accommodate the Church’s activities. There are no expenses associated with this group as the Church does not charge the group for the rental of space. We collect a “free will” donation that is used solely for refreshments and paper goods.

Chaplain Mashona Davis, a Site Team member, and I work to serve as advisors in the development of a therapeutic community during the two hour meeting/workshop. One key element of the program is the workbook: *The Twelve Steps – A Spiritual Journey, A Working Guide for Healing Damaged Emotions.*¹⁷ For each step, there are approximately twenty-five guiding questions to explore the ideas of each question. Also included are supportive scriptures which the participants can read, discuss and apply to their/our lives in order to develop a closer relationship with the God of their understanding, their fellow participants and themselves.

The final goal of the project was to develop a procedure of the twelve steps program that would permit the participants to experience the Twelve Steps and the healing through pastoral care and ultimately develop a program of the Emotional Support Group which will encompass the principle of the Twelve Step program of Recovery and a Pastoral Care Ministry. Through trial and error, we have developed an agenda that functions for our Emotional Support Group.

Agenda

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as a pathway to peace; taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with you forever in the next. (Reinhold Niebuhr)

¹⁷ Friends in Recovery, *The Twelve Steps - A Spiritual Journey: A Working Guide for Healing Damaged Emotions Based on Biblical Teachings* (San Diego: Recovery Publications, 1994).

Things to do

9:30-9:59 AM—Meet, greet and eat

10-10:30 AM—Read & Discuss the Step

10:31-11:25 AM—Self Care through Reflections

11:26 -11:30 AM—Closing prayer and concerns

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven; Give up this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever (Matthew 6:9-13).

The Emotion Support Group is currently running with two sessions per month.

There are approximately seven to ten persons which participate during each session.

Since its inception, the fabric of the group changed from church members only, to community members who have become church members.

CHAPTER 4

TO DEVELOP A DISCIPLINE OF CONFESSION

The Bible and Pastoral Care

What does the Bible say about pastoral care? What is the historical system used in the Black church where pastoral counseling is done? If we were fundamentalists, the answer to the first question would be “nothing.” However, I propose to show that the Bible speaks of pastoral care in the books of Genesis and later, in Exodus.

“In the beginning, God created the sky and the earth. The earth was empty and had no form. Darkness covered the ocean, and God’s Spirit was moving over the water” (Genesis 1: 1-2). As Christians, we believe that God crafted the world, as we understand it, from a nothingness that took on form. He was an artist who shaped and formed a spherical object, which we now call earth; and separated the water from the dry ground. According to our understanding, on each day, he did a massive amount of work. This is further documented in Genesis, chapter one, and by the sixth day, he created what we call man and woman. The newly formed earth was their home and He told them to have children and they should be the master of all living things that were created in the previous days: the birds, the fish and the animals. This was the directive of the creator to His creations.

“So the sky, the earth, and all that filled them were finished. By the seventh day God finished the work he had been doing, so he rested from all His work. God blessed

the seventh day and made it a holy day; because on that day he rested from all the work he had done in creating the world” (Genesis 2: 1-3). After six days, however long each day was, the creator, the One who has all power, rested and He took leave of His work to have some reflective time. God took care of Himself. I have concluded that from the beginning of creation, God showed those He created that self-care; or self-help is necessary in order to sustain His well-being. I choose to suggest that this may be the first form of documented pastoral care.

Karen Burton Mains says in her commentary about Recreation, “The purpose of a day of rest, or the Sabbath, is physical and emotional renewal, but it is also fellowship with ourselves, others and with God. It is a time of sharing laughter, serious ideas and intimacies between Creator and creature. Our souls are replenished, quieted, nurtured and caressed. Rest without spiritual rest is incomplete.”¹⁸ God looked beyond and knew beyond and took into consideration the needs of man’s physical and emotional needs. The Bible documents another example of self-help and pastoral care in the book of Exodus in chapter 18. Moses leaves Egypt; he marries and has children. He is established as the leader of the people. He enters into Midian, where he encounters his father-in-law, Jethro. Moses sends his wife and two sons to her father’s home. Jethro sends a message to Moses, and says that he wants to meet with his son-in-law. “I, Jethro, your father-in-law, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons” (Chapter 18: 6b). My interpretation is that Jethro is calling for a meeting. When they get together, Moses shares with Jethro his experience with the God of Israel. Jethro and Moses praise and worship the Lord for the great things that He has done in delivering the people from the Egyptians.

¹⁸ Karen Burton Mains, *Making Sunday Special* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987).

According to Exodus, chapter 18: 13-24, Jethro witnesses Moses giving instruction and one on one care to the people as Moses listened to verbal conflicts and disagreements. He attempts to solve them. Moses listens from sun-up to sun-down. This is done in an effort to resolve each dispute. Upon witnessing this, Jethro directs Moses:

What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone . . . You must be the people's representative [an intermediary] before God and bring their disputes to Him. Teach them the decrees and laws and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform (Exodus 18: 17-20 NIV).

Jethro challenges Moses to choose competent men, perhaps like him, who honor God and would not accept payment for their labor. Those hard cases, which require more insight and perhaps experience, would be referred to Moses directly. Moses accepted this advice and did what Jethro suggested.

The Historical System of Pastoral Care in the Black Church

The ministry of pastoral care may be defined as a service provided by the pastor or minister of an organized church to be responsible for the well-being and the connection of the church members and its community from the first visit through full involvement and participation in the Christian community.¹⁹ One of the essential job responsibilities, according to Mr. Stone is to “lead” a team in the infrastructure to insure the existence of a solid care involvement for all church attendees. Pastoral care is a communal concept. It exists whenever persons minister to one another in the name of God.²⁰

¹⁹ Kevin Stone, “Pastor of Pastoral Care Job Description,” Church Leadership and Infrastructure Development, February 2014, <http://www.executivepastoronline.com/pastor-of-pastoral-care-job-description/> (accessed February 6, 2015).

²⁰ Wimberly, *Pastoral Care*, 17.

There can only be one leader but this is considered a joint venture, which should not be approached alone. It is a group effort, although there is only one in charge. In the beginning of the Israelites' journey, Moses consulted with the Lord and his father-in-law as he moved forward in leading the Israelites out of captivity into a new environment. Moses established a relationship with the God of his understanding, took directions from Him to move a disgruntled, hurting congregation from Egypt into Canaan. This is the story, as documented by Moses, which the God of His understanding unfolds in history. The Bible has many of the responsibilities listed throughout the sixty-six books that would create an effective pastoral care ministry within the Black church that may be acceptable to the African Methodist Episcopal Church. With a contribution from the authors of the 12 Step recovery program by its authors, Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith, this combination would produce a program which would fit the needs of the congregation and the community.

Historically, according to Edward Wimberly, there are four functions that have been characterized as functions of pastoral care in the history of the Black Church. They are *healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling*.²¹

- *Healing* is defined as consisting of binding up the wounds and repairing the damage done by a disease. However, in this day and age it is not only the physical which needs to be healed. Healing of a person's character will start a holistic healing of the individual.
- *Sustaining* is defined as a person's creativity to maintain and endure the situation while going through the healing process.

²¹ Wimberly, *Pastoral Care*, 18; William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective* (Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 8-10.

- *Guiding* seeks to help persons in trouble to make alternative, healthy choices in order to solve those problems that they are facing.
- Finally, there is *reconciliation*: which would enable the person to mend broken relationships with others, with God and with oneself.

According to Dr. Wimberly, guiding and sustaining have been dominant functions in the history of pastoral care in the black church.²² We will create a ministry that will address the guiding and sustaining aspects of Pastoral Care in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. This will maintain those things that are important in the Black Church as well as perpetuate the social aspect of the African Methodist Episcopal Church; as it was founded on the premise of social equality of the black community within the church. As with Moses, the pastor cannot be the only care agent of the pastoral care ministry; the black pastor should consider utilizing the resources which are in the black church and the neighboring community.

The Difference between Pastoral Care and Counseling

Counseling and therapy are forms of solutions which are used when one cannot handle his or her personal problems. There are people who are trained to handle special situations and interventions that warrant professional counseling and therapy.²³ However, what is the difference between Pastoral care, counseling and therapy?

Edward Wimberly states that pastoral care exists whenever persons minister to the needs of others; and is defined as bringing the total caring resources of the church to the

²² Wimberly, *Pastoral Care*, 20.

²³ Bill Herring, “What’s the Difference between Counseling and Therapy,” <http://billherring.com/article/whats-difference-between-counseling-and-therapy> (accessed February 6, 2015).

assistance of families in crises.²⁴ One example of a caring resource is prayer. Counseling is generally giving advice. This only means that, in general, anyone can be a counselor since they are giving advice in the forms of personal experience in education, finance, health, spiritual, or anything under the sun. Counseling, according to mental health classifications, is definitely a short course of help or intervention focusing on the behavioral aspects of humans. The focus of counseling is short-term with usually lighter problems.²⁵

Those who have studied the Bible can give advice based on their experience. For example, Moses took the advice of his father-in-law Jethro and did not take on every dispute of the people in order to resolve the problem. He found persons willing and capable of listening to the disputes and solving them in accordance with their experience. As I use this example, I have taken this advice and I found that I don't have to be overwhelmed by all of the problems and their solutions. Based upon my experience with the situation at hand, I can give advice in the form of a word of encouragement that would motivate another individual to find relief from their immediate crisis. Pastoral care or counseling can take on the form of an almost quick fix to a not-so-severe situation.

Regarding therapy or psychotherapy, this is much longer than counseling in that it targets longer or chronic psychological and emotional problems that people bear. The focus of therapy is generally through the thought processes.²⁶ The important thing is to find someone we can trust, someone who listens, and is educationally equipped to help

²⁴ Wimberly, *Pastoral Care*, 18.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

sort out one's personal concerns. We can get a better handle on our thoughts and concerns, and eventually improve our own personal relationships.

Counseling and therapy are generally two terms that we interchange. A therapist can provide counseling and psychotherapy. However, a person who counsels (called a counselor) will depend on the educational degree he or she has received. Therapy involves a more difficult task than simple counseling. So the people conducting therapy can be psychiatrists, psychologists, or social workers.

Though counseling and therapy do not differ that much, both are forms of intervention to those who are seeking solutions to their emotional and psychological problems; without these people, we can't function normally due to the problems we are facing and bearing. So these people providing counseling and therapy are of great help to us.

In the Black community, and in my personal experience, the church was always the focal point of an individual's or a family's upbringing. When we had a problem, we went to the pastor of the church or a minister who we believed to be connected with God on a personal level. We would not consider going to an outside source for help because we would be perceived as being "crazy."

When I was a young girl, I watched my mother on Saturday nights, as she prepared her offerings for church for the following morning. She had a box of dated envelopes and she put her offering into each envelope. Even if she missed a Sunday, she would still give her offering. When she didn't go to church, which still exists in Harlem and is located on 120th Street and Lenox Avenue, she would send my brother and me to the local store front church, which was around the corner from where we lived in the

Bronx, so that we could attend Sunday school. As a girl, I was taught to go to church. When I grew older, I learned that going to Sunday school was not the same as going to worship service. In Sunday school, Sis Felton told us about the stories in the Bible. If we needed help with anything, Sis Felton would give us direction.

We read a story in the Sunday school soft covered book, and she explained what was written. As I grew older and attended worship services, I looked for the same type of relationship between what was written and the sermon which is what was spoken. I looked for the story behind the story.

The Narrative Approach to Pastoral Care

In my research, I discovered two authors, among many, who verified my hypothesis: Mr. Burrell David Dinkins and Mr. Edward P Wimberly, PhD. My hypothesis is that there is healing in telling your story to someone who will listen.

Briefly, Burrell Dinkins has been a pastoral counselor and educator for over thirty years. He has a degree in psychology from Asbury College and a Master of Divinity and Doctor of Sacred Theology in pastoral counseling from Emory University.²⁷ In his book, *Narrative Pastoral Counseling*, it confirmed to me that there could be healing, advice and guidance found within one's stories. There is confirmation and validation that could be found in biblical stories. Mr. Dinkins states, "Each person is a collection of stories. Our personal stories are what make us human and yours are as important as mine."²⁸ Our stories are always unfolding. Similar to the Lord's story of creating it is always unfolding. Life is not static. It keeps on moving, growing and evolving. There is a

²⁷ Dinkins, *Narrative Pastoral Counseling*.

²⁸ Ibid., 11.

direction that our life takes. Should a crisis, a detour occur we get thrown off track. What we do about the disruption either strengthens us or stops us.

Edward Wimberly states, “A truly native style of pastoral care in the black church draws upon personal stories from the pastor’s (or minister’s) life, stories from the practice of ministry (experience) and stories from the Bible. Genuine pastoral care from a narrative perspective involves the use of stories by pastors in ways that help persons and families visualize how and where God is at work in their lives and thereby receive healing and wholeness.”²⁹

My Personal Awareness of the Concept of the Twelve Step Program

I discovered the Twelve Step program on a personal level. I was in the most painful period of my life and what I wanted was relief. I chose to anesthetize myself with alcohol. This was the socially acceptable thing to do. After all, I had my own apartment, I had a bachelor’s degree, and I had a job on Wall Street. What could possibly be wrong? At this point in my life, I no longer attended church, but I still prayed. “Lord, please don’t let me get drunk today.” Sometimes the Lord answered my prayers, but most of the time, he remained silent. As smart as I was, I could not see the relationship between not picking up the first drink and getting drunk. This experience was to be the beginning of my process of healing.

On March 3, 1981, I was hung-over but I had to go to go to work. I missed a number of days because of this ailment: diarrhea, upset stomach, migraine headaches, and could not afford to take any more days off. On this day, I needed a quick fix in order to steady my stomach and my hands. I took one more drink, so that I could ride the

²⁹ Wimberly *African American Pastoral Care*, 1.

subway and get to my place of employment. This one drink was the one that led to another. The person with whom I spent the night didn't know what to do, so he called my friend at work and my brother. The Lord interrupted my life, such as it was. My brother came over and saw my condition. By that time, my friend had called and spoke with him. She suggested that I go to a detox facility located on Long Island.

I arrived and remember very little. When I came to, I do remember seeing people with little black spots on their foreheads. "Where was I?" I had on some kind of hospital gown and was directed to sit and have breakfast at a family style table. I was introduced to the others around the table and realized or told that it was Ash Wednesday (March 4, 1981). I was institutionalized. This was the beginning of the end of a life out of control. This is the beginning of my experience of the Twelve Step Program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Origin of the Twelve Steps Program of Alcoholic Anonymous

Alcoholic Anonymous is an international fellowship founded in 1935 by Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith in Akron Ohio. A.A. states that its primary purpose is "to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety."³⁰ Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob were the major contributors of the development of The Twelve Step Program of spiritual and character development. A.A came from the Oxford Group, a non-denominational movement modeled after first-century Christianity.³¹ Further research will reveal that the Twelve Step program has a religious background. For example, Bill Wilson formulated

³⁰ Michael Gross, "Alcoholics Anonymous: Still Sober After 75 Years," "American Journal of Public Health 100, no. 12 (Dec. 1, 1990), <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2978172/> (accessed February 6, 2015).

³¹ Susan Cheever, *My Name Is Bill: Bill Wilson: His Life and the Creation of Alcoholics Anonymous* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 129.

the final draft with the thought that those who were in recovery needed a total of twelve steps. His first draft consisted of six steps; however, he had a thought in mind of the twelve apostles.

I personally thought that twelve steps were fashioned after the Ten Commandments of Moses with the two commandments of Jesus, “Love the Lord God with all thy heart, soul and mind. This is the first and great commandment and the second is like it; you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets. Nevertheless, I believe that the Twelve Steps has its origins from the Bible.

Conclusion

“When people are linked to God’s unfolding story, their own lives become different. Significant changes take place. People find that life has direction for them, that they have value as human beings.”³² Once the church community is exposed to God’s story, we can benefit by using the all the resources of the church which now includes story-telling and story-listening which moves us through healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciliation. Therefore, in order to implement a ministry of pastoral care and develop a therapeutic community in which the healing can take place, develop and grow, and which will satisfy the needs of the church and the community, we will incorporate the four functions of the general definition of pastoral care in the black church and use the narrative approach through pastoral care and incorporate a Twelve Step Program of directives to gel the three concepts together into A Pastoral Care and Wellness Ministry that fits our African American Church and Community.

³² Wimberly, *African American Pastoral Care*, 5.

Biblical/Theological:

What is the biblical understanding of healing? What does God say about healing? What is the prophetic nature of healing? Biblical hermeneutics is the study of the principles of interpretation concerning the books of the Bible. It is part of the broader field of hermeneutics which involves the study of principles for the text and includes all forms of communication: verbal and nonverbal.³³

In his book, *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling*, Edward Wimberly states that the use of hermeneutics of engagement is important to illustrate the use of Bible stories in pastoral counseling.³⁴ When a person is in need of encouragement in a matter of physical healing, and scripture/Bible story is used as a reference, the person should be familiar with the scripture in order for the process to be helpful and effective.

I propose to show that within our therapeutic group community, we can effectively give hope and encouragement to a person who is in need of physical, spiritual and emotional healing through the use of scripture and the twelve step program and answer the questions: What does God say about healing? What is the biblical understanding of healing? What is the prophetic nature of healing?

And what is the Lord saying to me about healing? Well, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I was also struggling with a call to the ministry. On February 13 my friend was scheduled to preach her trial sermon. I attended the service to provide support. Her subject was the book of Esther and her title was “If I perish, I perish, but I am going to

³³ Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, and J. I. Packer, *New Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988).

³⁴ Edward Wimberly, *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994).

see the king.” I didn’t have any idea what this was about, so I sat, I listened and when she finished, I left.

On the next day, February 14, I discovered a lump in my left breast that was not there the night before. I dressed, went to work and called my gynecologist for an appointment. He scheduled a series of tests and the result was a malignant mass.

I had breast cancer and no one in my family was predisposed to this disease; I was not overweight, I was in fairly good health. I was a devoted wife of a preacher-in-training; I was a concerned, participatory parent; I was a Wall Street banker and now an educator. I heard the voice of God say, “Teach my Word.” I resigned my banker’s position and took a teaching position for the then Board of Education at a salary of \$17,000 a year, less than I was previously making.

I attended church regularly, I was a good member, I tithed, and I was a stewardess, a class leader. Why did the Lord allow this to happen to me? The Lord and I are still working on this answer. I prayed and fasted until one day, one of my sisters in the church told me to stop fasting, as I was losing weight, and have the operation. The operation was scheduled.

I heard a T.V. evangelist say, “All sickness is not unto death.” I received this word, had the operation, the mass was “so small, it’s a wonder that you found this. The good news is that the cancer was a slow duplicating cancer and we got it all.”

During my first year of recovery, I was afraid that I was going to die. The Lord reiterated, “This sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” Lazarus was sick; but Jesus said regarding him, “This sickness is not unto death.” It doesn’t matter as to what my experience was and what

people around me said about my situation. What matters is what the Lord says and what will be accomplished.

According to B. Daniel in his article, the “literal meaning of death is the ‘end’ and here, the sickness of Lazarus was a test.”³⁵ God will test His children and we should pray for grace to face the test. God’s testing doesn’t necessarily mean that he is ending, but in fact, He is beginning. God’s testing may mean a higher walk with God—for His purpose, so that He may be glorified through the test that He is allowing us to go through. The test, in my case and perhaps others, is a series of lessons that I and others may learn.

Acts 9: 36-42 tells us about a miraculous healing that a woman named Dorcas experienced.

In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha [which, when translated, is Dorcas] who was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, “Please come at once!” Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them. Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the widows and presented her to them alive. This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

Dorcas was a seamstress and she made garments for the poor. “She was always doing good and helping the poor.”³⁶ Dorcas was an early Christian. She attended a Christian Church in Joppa, located on the coast of Palestine about 35 miles from

³⁵ Blessen Daniel, “This Sickness Is not Unto Death,” The Living Rhema Igniting and Lightening, January 19, 2011, <http://thelivingrhema.com/2011/01/19/this-sickness-is-not-unto-death/> (accessed February 10, 2015).

³⁶ Herbert Lockyer, *All the Women of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1967), 46-48.

Jerusalem and she was a community servant. The Lord saved her heart and she did her works through this gift, not to be noticed, not for merit, but for the love of the Lord.³⁷

The prophetic message is that there are many women who give and are community minded; however, there is a difference between spirituality and religion. Luke says that “Dorcas was filled with good works and he meant the word ‘full’ to refer primarily to her inward grace, which prompted the outward deeds. ‘Good’ works are only genuine and Christian when the soul of the performer is imbued with them.”³⁸

The prophetic word is that one must be deeply influenced and permeated by the Spirit of the Lord. Dorcas was so permeated by the love of Christ, that those who saw her, saw her goodness and the glory of the Creator. What she did was inspired by the Spirit of the Risen Christ whom she served.

This is the message that the Lord wanted me and others to know. This is the lesson to be learned; not that I was so good, or so worthy, but that the Lord is so good and decided to deliver me from cancer so that I can tell others of His mercy, of His grace and His goodness. Others will see the Lord through me, so I have to get out of the way!

The resurrection of Dorcas had a twofold effect:

1. It was a miracle that she was raised from the dead so that others would see
2. The act of the miracle was to convince all the truth of the Christian faith attested as it was a miraculous power. Dorcas raised from physical death became the cause of others to be raised from the many graves of sin and unbelief.³⁹

³⁷ Lockyer, *All the Women of the Bible*, 46.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 46-48.

The church in Joppa probably increased its membership after Dorcas' resurrection. The Jews believed in Jesus after Lazarus' resurrection. A transformed life attracts others to the Savior.

Social Justice:

How can we enlist resources in the Brooklyn area/Bedford Stuyvesant community that could help those who are wounded and discouraged? What steps do we take to develop a referral network for the helpless?

In an attempt to form a presence in the community and become familiar with the Bedford Stuyvesant Community, as a minister I began to attend community-based meetings. I became a member of the Bedford Stuyvesant Community Partnership Program, representing the Calvary-Fellowship African Methodist Episcopal Church. In addition, our church became a member of the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, New York. I represented our church as an intern in the Faith-Based Initiative Program: Casey Foundation Child Welfare Program. This program is created for the purpose of educating and reunifying children to their birth families or finding placement in suitable foster care families. The Casey Foundation acted in conjunction with the Administration of Children's Services. I believed that my organization skills and counseling skills could be utilized and developed in both these volunteer positions.

There were a series of events that led to my voluntary positions of Community Representative under the auspices of the Bedford Stuyvesant Community Partnership Program:

As a former, retired principal in the Department of Education system, I was afforded the opportunity to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees on the New Vision Charter Schools from August 2012-June 2014. This led to service as a member of

the New Vision Brooklyn Community Advisory Board from September 2014 to the present.

I served as a member of Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn Community Partnership Program from August 2012 to August 2014 and after a series of workshops and training, I became and served as a Community Representative for the Bedford Stuyvesant CPP from June 2013 until the present.

A brief position description of the Community Representative is as follows which incorporates my development of administrative and counselor skills:

A Community Representative is someone who will

- Support families in their efforts to keep their family together
- Be present with the families during their family team conference, which will take place in various non-traditional settings throughout Bedford-Stuyvesant
- Support the parent in their family team conference and ensure they understand and know their rights during the process
- Serve as an advocate to families as they move through the process of the conference
- Commit to an average of 2-4 hours per week.

As an effort to direct those in need of Social Services, I was led to Ms. Dale Joseph, Assistant Commissioner of Office of Community Partnerships, and New York City Administration for Children's Services. (See Appendix C.)

CHAPTER 5

TO DEVELOP INNER TRANSFORMATION AND STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Ministerial Competencies and Report by the Team

The primary focus of this assessment instrument is on the Candidate's role and performance in the local ministerial setting. It is not concerned with matters of individual personality or one's perceived fitness for a particular ministry. It is also not an instrument designed to assess one's theological commitments and beliefs. Such matters may come up in the assessment process, but the Candidate for the Doctor of Ministry is not being evaluated for his or her fitness for a particular ministry, nor on his or her theological beliefs.

The Team and Candidate working together are free to adapt the instrument to their own context or situation. In doing so it is important that an appropriate range of areas of competency be considered; that the Candidate be allowed sufficient opportunity to hear and respond to the assessments of the Site Team; and that a final written report on the Candidate's competencies in ministry, drawn from this assessment process and to which Candidate and Site Team members alike agree, be submitted to the D. Min. Mentor as outlined in the syllabus for the Mentor and Research Seminar.

Site Team members are asked to be sensitive but honest in responding to each of the areas. Should anything of a confidential nature arise, members are reminded that they are not to discuss it outside the Site Team meeting.
-New York Theological Seminary

The Process

Final Site Team Members involved are:

- The Reverend Mashona Davis, M. Div. New Brunswick Theological Seminary; and Chaplain of the Veterans Association, Ossining, New York; Minister to Youth, Calvary-Fellowship A.M.E. Church.

- Ms. Francina Simmons, Vice Chairperson of Steward Board; Calvary-Fellowship A.M.E. Church.
- Ms. Esther Delaney, Secretary of the Trustee Board; Calvary-Fellowship A.M.E. Church.
- Reverend Joseph Walston, pastor of Calvary-Fellowship A.M.E. Church.

At various informal one-on-one and group meetings, the above listed site team members received a copy of the challenge statement and the proposed project, The Emotional Support Group. I emailed copies of the competencies to them and asked that they complete the answers; and they met via conference call. The written responses were forwarded and the documents were compiled by Ms. Esther Delaney and given to me with their feedback. At the beginning of this project, the Reverend Alvan Johnson, PhD was the coordinator of my Site Team. He was then the Presiding Elder of the Brooklyn Westchester District. Now, in the tradition of the African Methodist Episcopal tradition, he took a position as the pastor of Grant A.M.E. Church, Boston, Massachusetts. I am grateful for his leadership, direction and guidance in the initial stages of this project.

A summary of the Site Team's evaluations and my assessments of the ministerial competencies follow. The two competencies that I will personally develop are counselor and administrator.

"Rev. Carmen is skilled in relating and communicating; however, she should consider developing her skills in Christian Counseling. Continue/Develop. Candidate can develop and become an excellent counselor with one-on-one counseling situations. She understands, encourages and is empathetic. This competency is shown by the growth of the emotional support group at my church since its inception. Its great success indicates

the effectiveness of her counseling as she continues to pursue further knowledge in counseling.” *Site Team*

Continue and Develop. I will develop my skills as a pastoral care minister by auditing the course, “Christian Counseling.” This course focuses on the person as a leader in order to nurture personal excellence and spiritual growth of others. This course was given by New York Divinity School, as a part of a Ministerial Certificate Program— at Antioch Baptist Church, Brooklyn. Additionally, I hold a two year certificate in Pastoral Care from Blanton-Peale, New York.

Administrator

“Rev. Carmen easily clarifies and succinctly defines and analyzes a task or problem. Continue. The candidate is an asset to her congregation and community in this competency. Her work as educator/administrator helped the local church and connection.” *Site Team.*

Continue. I agree with this assessment and am an experienced educational administrator with skills that are transferable to the organized church; however, I will develop administrative skills in a Faith-Based Organization.

Competencies Chosen for Development

As Counselor:

Whatever the model or theory one chooses to guide one’s pastoral counseling, it is imperative that the minister is capable of establishing creative relationships that can help others become more whole. Fundamentally, the pastoral counselor should be molded in the tradition of shepherding with an accent on four functions: healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling. In doing so, she has the privilege of walking with others on their inner journey toward wholeness. *New York Theological Seminary*

Strategies:

- I will engage in a study of relevant literature and course work concerning Pastoral Counseling.
- I will consult with Dr. Nancy Fields, New York Theological Seminary as to the relevant course that would be appropriate to satisfactorily develop this competency.

Evaluation:

- Feedback form course confirming satisfactory completion of course.

In preparing this document and this phase of ministry, I discovered the theorist of Pastoral Care, Dr. Edward Wimberly. I've attempted to become familiar with his work, "as he was motivated to explore, (and encouraged to write the missing literature in black pastoral studies) the subject of pastoral care in the black church as a result of my doctoral studies at Boston University School of Theology . . . "⁴⁰ and found that his books provided a great deal of information, research and life experience. I attempted to infuse a Twelve Step Program of recovery into a church ministry with a pastoral care influence. I've concluded that the counselor aspect in pastoral care is listening and sharing. Since the Twelve Step Program of recovery is considered a "self-help" therapeutic community, the counselors are merely those who share their experiences and challenges on any particular manner. As a facilitator of the group, I have become a "counselor" with the minimum of class/course work involved in being licensed and credentialed. I've trained a co-facilitator who can step into the role whenever it is necessary. I've also trained or demonstrated to other members of the group on how to lead the discussion of the Steps.

⁴⁰ Wimberly, *Pastoral Care in the Black Church*, 9.

I did not consult with Dr. Nancy Fields of New York Theological Seminary; however, I did consult with an associate in the African Methodist Episcopal, the Reverend Kim Anderson, D. Min., Pastor of Metropolitan A.M.E. Church of New York. She is a member of the New York Annual conference and her expertise in the A.M.E. church was invaluable.

I audited a Christian Counseling Course given by New York Divinity School, New York. The text that was used was *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, by Gary R. Collins.⁴¹ There were two points in the course that I found very useful.

- The instructor used a character from the Bible and had the students evaluate the character, analyze the character and suggest a way to address the problem. Not only was this exercise interesting, but it was enjoyable to do. I used this exercise in a Bible study workshop.
- The second point was found in the text, in the section for counseling Alcohol-Related Problems. In a chart created by a group of researchers, they determined that Twelve Step Programs and other programs that are modeled on the same primary focus of moving progressively through the steps to recovery. [It] usually involves belief in a Higher Power, acceptance and surrender, receiving support and guidance, attending meetings, sometimes use of slogans.⁴² I stand witness that the Twelve Step program of Alcoholic Anonymous works. In my mind, I believe that the Twelve Step program can be used as a tool in the process of counseling and recovery in life's issues.

⁴¹ Gary Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, 3rd ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 668.

⁴² Chart created by Jennifer P. Read, Christopher W. Kahler, and John F. Stevenson, "Bridging the Gap between Alcoholism Treatment Research and Practice Identifying What Works and Why," *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice* 32 (June 2001): 227-238.

As Administrator:

An administrator is able to define and analyze a task or problem succinctly and clearly, establish concrete and realistic goals, develop strategies which flow out of these goals and initiate a clear process of evaluation. She communicates a sense of mission which sees each task as part of the whole life of the congregation and establishes a collegial environment in which the gifts of others are expressed. Through it all there is precision, accuracy, organization and purpose. One believes that time is well spent, that efforts are not duplicated, and that efficiency is balanced against other competing factors. *New York Theological Seminary*

Strategies:

- I will identify and analyze the task on creating a pastoral care ministry that will suit the needs of the Black congregation and the community
- I will get feedback and understanding of the group process and dynamics. I will develop proficiency to work with the group process and individuals to evaluate achievements in order to decide next action steps

Evaluation: Creation of a pastoral care ministry that can address the needs of a congregation and community. Provide a document that describes the steps taken to achieve an effective ministry and produce a document entitled, “OurStories” where there are confirmations that the process helped to achieve wellness.

I have successfully created a pastoral care ministry that can address the needs of the congregation and the community-at-large if used. I have provided a document that describes the steps taken in order to achieve an effective ministry. I have also created a document called “OurStories” that are confirmation of the effectiveness of the program/ministry.

Site Team Member: Esther Delaney's Report as it pertains to the competency of counselor and administrator:

Counselor

Rev. Carmen is a free, open and honest person. She is accessible, skilled in communicating, able to be an agent of reconciliation to help guide others through their inner journey. She is able to recognize her limits as a counselor and to make appropriate referrals when necessary. These competencies were demonstrated as Rev. Carmen serves as Facilitator for the Emotional and Wellness Support Group at the Church. I was privileged to attend several sessions and witnessed her ability to answer questions and to refer when necessary. Persons from within the congregation and from outside the congregation were able to attend and speak freely. Rev. Carmen was able to offer words of comfort when necessary, prayer when needed, and practical guidance. –Esther Delaney, January 2015

Administrator

Rev. Carmen is well equipped as an administrator. I personally witnessed this skill as an employee of the New York City Department of Education, under her supervision. Rev. Carmen has the ability to work with others, listens to them, and can identify and make use of the personnel and material resources that were available. Once the mission was identified Rev. Carmen was able to pull the team together and handle the details efficiently, with accuracy and precision. Rev. Carmen kept the lines of communication open with a listening ear. Rev. Carmen made decisions that made the ultimate goal reachable. –Esther Delaney- January 2015

Site Team Member: Francina Simmons' Report as it pertains to the competency of counselor and administrator:

Counselor

Reverend Carmen is skilled in relating and communicating and is an accessible and approachable person. This can be seen through the growth in numbers of the emotional support group within the church and community. The group meets consistently two times a month. As a facilitator Rev. Carmen is able to aid in healing, help others to sustain and work through crises and helps guide others through their inner journey. -

Francina Simmons, *January 2015*

Administrator

Reverend Carmen easily clarifies and succinctly defines and analyzes a task or problem. Her competency in administration can be clearly seen as she initiated two programs through the church to benefit the community utilizing the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies through the Visit Host Program and Development of Children's Foster Care Ministry. As a community representative she was able to make use of the personal and material resources of the congregation and community. Reverend Carmen handles details with precision and accuracy and maintains effective lines of communication. - *Francina Simmons, January 2015*

Observation of the Emotional Support by Chaplain, Reverend Mashona Davis, M.Div.:

"I was not prepared for what I observed visiting the site. The participants sat at tables in a "u" shape with booklets. There were an equal number of men to women. I recognized some persons from weekly worship service. The facilitator was engaging and persons who I have never seen speak two words during worship service were reading,

writing and sharing their feelings. The use of the 12 steps provided structure and grounding as participants shared some of their deepest pain. Over and over thanks were given to the group for emotional breakthroughs.

I was particularly moved as the men were committed, prepared and open about their feelings, needs and growth. This was amazing because the men at Calvary Fellowship are often the strong quiet ones in the church community. The group displayed very healthy dynamics with shared responsibilities that did not put the burden of leadership on one person. Everyone took turns leading and reading passages. The feeling of mutual support permeated the room.

My only concern is that although the emotional support group is advertised weekly in the church bulletin, most people have no idea how powerful and effective a program exists in their church or community. As time has passed and this community has grieved the recent deaths due to police action and wrongful citizen action against police, this type of support group and 12 STEP structure is a place for all to bring their hurt. I pray that the group continue and find a way to advertise during times of peace and community mourning.” *Rev. Davis*

CHAPTER 6

MY STORY

I was born in Manhattan, New York in Flower Fifth Avenue Hospital on October 30. My family, my mother and father moved to the Bronx and that's where I was raised in the Crotona area for the next twenty years. I attended elementary, junior high school and high school—all in the Bronx. As an interesting point to me, the building in which I lived, and the schools which I attended are no longer there serving in the same capacity as I remember. I've learned through this process of thinking that nothing remains the same throughout the years. Everything changes, from my body to my environment. As a young person, I actually thought that all things remain the same. What a naive thought and I had a lot to learn.

My story of healing began when I realized that there was a God. I thought of God as a tall, white man, with a long white beard, sitting on a throne which was situated on a cloud. When I did anything wrong, which I did, I waited for a lightning rod to strike me dead. I realize now that I was always walking in fear. I was usually afraid to do anything for fear that I would be zapped by God. I would be punished by my father and zapped by my father in Heaven. I was usually punished by my father—"stay in your room," "you can't go here," "you can't go there," but never zapped by God.

I was sent to Sunday school almost every Sunday. If I didn't go, I couldn't go out to play. When my mother went to church, we all had to go. My memories of church were limited to laying my head on my mother's lap and apparently falling asleep; and of a lady

who was screaming, jumping up and down, running here and there and the ushers (I thought that they were nurses, as they worn white uniform) holding hands and making a circle around her until she calmed down. I asked my mother what was the matter with the lady and my mother explained that the lady had the Holy Spirit. What a revelation! So if by some situation in my life where I was to “get” the Holy Spirit, would I respond in this crazy manner? I certainly hope not.

I heard, in either Sunday school or Church service, that if I sang the song:

“Come into my heart; come into my heart; come into my heart, Lord Jesus, Come in today, Come in to Stay; Come into my heart Lord Jesus.”

I will be saved. So I sang the song, and I became saved. I didn’t know from what, but I would be saved. I believed that I would be saved from being zapped by a lightning rod. So I am here to state, that I haven’t been zapped by a lightning rod!

As I matured, I learned to ask the Lord to forgive me for having sex without being married; I asked the Lord to forgive me for drinking wine and getting drunk. The older I became, the more I asked for forgiveness. I grew tall and relatively smart by way of the school books. I had not mastered the life lesson that drinking too much alcohol will make one drunk; and having unprotected sex would eventually make one pregnant. I frequently drank with my junior high school and high school friends and this became disastrous. I occasionally had sex with my sixteen year old boyfriend and became pregnant—a statistic. I was not mature enough to understand what was happening with my body and my mother did not know how to explain the changes. I asked the Lord to forgive me and I believe that He did.

At sixteen, I became an unwed teenage mother. The Lord provided as my sister took and raised my daughter from birth and I was able to return to my senior year of high

school, only one month late and was able to graduate on time. I didn't miss a day in school during the first six months of pregnancy and I did not show. I blossomed during July and August of that year; gave birth in September, in a bedroom in my sister's home in South Carolina, delivered by a midwife.

During this time of my life, I experienced rejection by my father—he stopped speaking to me even though we all lived in the same house; nurturing by my mother—she said that she would help me this time, but don't do it again; and the loss of my daughter being taken from me. I did not have the choice of keeping this child as I see the young, unmarried, pregnant women have today. There are systems in place today that are more sophisticated, with more red tape, foster care agencies, court hearings, placement proceedings and the like. The Lord was looking out for me. My daughter was cared for in the same manner as her five cousins by my sister and her husband.

I continued to pray at night: now I lay me down to sleep . . . and in the morning, Lord please makes everything go right today . . . and if I drank, Lord please don't let me get drunk.

I graduated from High School and was accepted into City College of New York. At that time, the City College was tuition free. My father paid for the registration and the books. This pleased my father, although he never said so, because I wanted his approval—(HIS APPROVAL!). I realized that I attended school, in some capacity for the next 20 years: I earned my Bachelor's; (I drank and was married to a man who was not the father of my daughter and I became the victim of domestic violence;) two Masters; a professional Certificate in Education; and my Master's in Divinity.

I also drank and drugged for the first seven years of the twenty. I had a high school diploma, a child in the care of my sister, a College Degree, a job on Wall Street, divorced and moved to Brooklyn all by the age of ripe old age of 25. I did everything that I was “old enough and bold enough to do.” I had not set foot into a church unless one of my contemporaries was getting married. Interestingly enough, I still prayed. Although I was an attractive person, I didn’t like who I saw in the mirror. I was filled with the shame that I brought upon my family and no amount of earned degrees made it right. I went to work because a strong work ethic was imposed upon me. I couldn’t lose my job, because it would bring more shame on my family. It was bad enough that I brought embarrassment upon my parents when I left my husband. We both drank and drugged. It was a wonder that we stayed together so long.

I didn’t tell my parents until they figured it out. I just never felt good enough, I never felt smart enough, I didn’t have the right clothes, I couldn’t wear the right make-up; I felt that I was too fat, but in reality, I was too thin. I didn’t feel good about myself, my self-esteem was low. When I drank, I felt good for a little while; I felt like I fit in; I felt like one of the gang; I felt like I belonged; but, the feeling was fleeting. And now I was a divorced woman.

I reached my bottom on March 3, 1981, when I found myself lying on the floor of my living room, in a taupe business suit, getting ready to go to work. I was violently hung-over and I wanted to stop my hand from shaking and my head from hurting, so I took several drinks to steady my hand, to calm my stomach and head. Apparently, I passed out.

The Lord interrupted my life. When I came to, I was in a detox facility on Long Island. I was in bed clothes and when I woke up, I was in what looked like a hospital room with two other women; I was directed to go to a family-style breakfast in the dining room, which had bowls of food on the table and other people sitting around. Some of these strange people had black spots on their foreheads. Somehow, I realized that it was Ash Wednesday. From my upbringing, I remember that on this day, we were supposed to give up something. I've done this before and the ritual was familiar. I've actually given up drinking from Ash Wednesday until Easter Sunday during previous years. I remember one comment, "We like you better when you drink." Many times, I didn't like me when I drank; but those who I associated with liked me better; so, I continued to drink.

Unfortunately, this time, I was put in a facility, against my will and this time it was Ash Wednesday. Was this a coincidence? The Lord interrupted my life and put a stop to my insane behavior. This is a synopsis of what happened and what it was like. Upon reflection, it was one of the most emotional times in my life. While my parents were still living, I did not show myself unworthy while I was in their presence. I was the daughter who had a job on Wall Street. Little did they know that I almost drank myself out of that job. After five days of detox, I returned to work and was put on probation. One more absence and I would be terminated.

What it is like today?

During my stay in the detox, I was introduced to the Twelve Step Program of Alcoholics Anonymous and what a program. It had lots of dos and don'ts, lots of slogans, lots of people – old and young, and lots of meetings and I had lots of questions. I found it amazing that a group of people were able to get together, make coffee and have cookies,

talk about what happened while they were drinking, meet for an hour and some continued to not drink for “one day at a time.”

There was one slogan that I didn’t understand-“I works if you work it.” I didn’t understand what that meant. What is “it” that works? I did not drink for one year because I was afraid. Fear of losing my job, fear of being found out by my parents and again bringing disgrace to my family yet again, fear that I would have an enlarged liver and subject to cirrhosis and death kept me from picking up a drink. After two years of not taking a drink, listening to others and going to group therapy and AA meetings, I learned that “it” was the Twelve Step Program that worked.

What a discovery. “I admitted that I was powerless over alcohol and my life was unmanageable.”

Who would admit defeat? Admission and identification of the problem is the first step to coming to terms with any problem. Everyone has to reach their bottom;⁴³ everyone has to have her own story. Everyone has to surrender, even me.

“Came to believe that a Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity.” It was in this step that my relationship with God was rediscovered. The Twelve Steps are only suggestions.⁴⁴ This step leads me back to God. When I prayed, I felt that God didn’t answer all my requests. But He did watch over me, He protected me through the many situations in which I found myself. I came out on the other side. The insanity was my belief that I could drink safely without getting drunk. I only found myself in unexplained

⁴³ “Step One,” *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (New York: Alcoholic Anonymous World Services, 1981), 21.

⁴⁴ “Step Two,” 25.

predicaments when I drank. I tried changing the brands and the amounts, but to no avail. Prayer did not stop me from getting drunk; only not drinking kept me from getting drunk.

“Made a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God as I understood Him.” This is the step of all steps for me. Step Three is like opening a locked door.⁴⁵ I grew up with the image of God as a white man with a long white beard. I understood God as a mean and vengeful God. I understood God to be one who just waits for me to do bad things, so that He can punish me, even though I have Him in my heart. I always wanted to please Him, even though He didn’t answer all of my prayers.

Sometime between 1981 and 1982, the book, the *Color Purple* by Alice Walker came out. There is a line in the book that Shug declares that God gets upset when one passes by the color purple and does not acknowledge it because it is a majestic color. Shug also says that God is everywhere. He is even in the trees; and when a branch is broken, God feels it.

This thought changed my entire outlook on God. I began to understand God as a God who hurt when I hurt; who cries when I cried and who laughed when I laughed. No longer was this sterile God limited to a throne in the clouds in the sky. I grew to understand the God that was everywhere; in the party where I was in a room where I almost was raped and it did not happen; in the amusement park where the attendant stopped the ride, let me off because I almost fell out; in my bed where I turned over and threw up on the floor when I was in a drunken stupor. I could have choked on my own vomit. In another instance, I could have died in a fire when I fell asleep with a lit

⁴⁵ “Step Three,” 35.

cigarette that burned a hole in the mattress and somehow instead of catching flame, it went out. I was humbled when I became aware of this.

“Made a searching and fearless inventory of ourselves.” I plowed through this step from start to finish on more than one occasion. Common symptoms of emotional insecurity are worry, anger, self-pity, and depression.⁴⁶ When I did my inventory, I realized that not only do I have the above mentioned four symptoms; I also am subject to procrastination, perfectionism and dishonesty. These are the seven key emotional problems that I had to work on.

“Admitted to God, to ourselves, and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.” “Twelve Steps deflate ego. Step Five is difficult but necessary to sobriety and peace of mind. Confession is ancient discipline and what do we receive from Step Five? We should consider gaining the beginning of true kinship with man and God.”⁴⁷ I struggled with the dishonesty aspect as I admitted that I was powerless over alcohol; however, I did not admit that I was still using drugs. Again the Lord interrupted my life and wanted me to be closer to Him. In order to do that, I had to be honest with my recovery. Once I did so, I experienced a “Oneness with God.”⁴⁸ What a freeing experience as I no longer had to hide the truth for my contemporaries. I restarted my sobriety count from July 7, 1983, when I finally admitted the exact nature of my wrongs. It was at this time that I experienced a hole in my soul. There was something missing. I met a man who was also working on his life as well and he invited me to church. As soon as I sat and started to enjoy the service, I realized that I had not been in a church worship

⁴⁶ “Step 4,” 42.

⁴⁷ “Step 5,” 55.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

service in 15 years and I also realized that this is what was missing in my life- that feeling of belonging and the worship experience.

I've discovered an amazing thing about the Twelve Step Program. Familiarity with the program can only make one's life better. If I work the program, and immerse myself into Step Three, having made the decision to Let go and let God I can count on the promises of God and the promises of the 12 Step program. The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous tells us "There may be some wrongs we can never fully right. However if we are painstaking about our development we will be amazed before we are half-way through."⁴⁹

⁴⁹ *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 3rd ed. (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1976), 83-84.

CHAPTER 7

THEIR STORIES – THE JOURNEY

I've asked a number of people to contribute their experiences in attending a Twelve Step Program group. While I've heard many stories, identifying their problems, their anxieties, their successes and their failures, the response to the writing the documents has been very limited. I have submitted three stories of women who I admire and respect, because of the self-help that they have imposed upon their lives and in so doing, have acknowledge the help, motivation and encouragement from their Higher Power, whom each chooses to call God. The first story of healing is from Nameless who I met at a conference in South Carolina.

My Story by Nameless, West Virginia

I am a 45 year-old, fifth generation African American woman who earned a BA in Communications, a MS in Organizational Management and a PhD in Higher Education with a specialization in Leadership. I have worked in higher education over 15 years and I worked in both student and academic affairs. My first drink was at the age of 12 while living in a housing project. After four relapses over a 20 year life span, I finally took my last drink at the age of 32 on November 24, 2002. My sobriety date is November 25, 2002.

My Story

I was christened and raised Polish Catholic. At the age of 5 I attended a Catholic school for kindergarten. The nuns were mean to me because I talked a lot. I thought I had

something important to say but they told me otherwise. I felt fear. I received communion and confirmation. I strived to be the best in Sunday school and even received an award for memorizing all of the books in the Bible. I learned how to make confession, ask for forgiveness through recited prayers, and commit the same sin again knowing all I had to do was say a few Hail Mary and Our Father prayers and all would be forgiven. As a Polish family, we grew up with alcohol during holiday meals where all of the kids could have a little sip. I remember wanting to join a convent so I would feel safe but this feeling was short lived with the arrival of my first boyfriend who became my first drug and introduced me to drinking a case of Colt 45 at the age of 12.

Early Beginning

To understand my journey to taking my first drink, I must tell you the story of my mother. My mother left home at the age of 14 to work in the Poconos. She lost her first child, a boy, by a man who was my mother's first true love. He died in a motorcycle accident and she moved to DC and eventually to San Francisco with financial help from her father. It was there that she met my father who was a merchant seaman who provided financially for his mother and my mom. My mother loved me from the day I was born on June 18, 1969. I felt spoiled with her love and attention. My Dad was rarely around and I felt like it was just me and my mom. It soon became apparent that my Dad was an alcoholic and womanizer who would beat my mother and give her gifts in exchange for forgiveness. After a few years, my mother drove 3000 miles back to her hometown in Pennsylvania where she entered into a relationship with a drug dealing man who was not afraid of my Dad; nor would he ever lay a hand on my mom. Seeing drug deals and going for rides with people who worked for my step-Dad felt exciting and grown up. Little did I

know that during my young age of 5 through 11, my mom was building an addiction to pills, alcohol and marijuana?

We moved every year. Once after being evicted we had to live in a “welfare hotel” where you pay rent by the week. Most times we lived in a nice place thanks to section 8 housing. I remember telling my mom that if she did not quit, I was going to move to San Francisco to live with my Dad which was better than living with her at the time.

I would visit my paternal grandmother every summer and spend time with my Dad, which included drinking Old English Malt Liquor and 2-liter bottles of Cooler. When my Dad went out, he brought me along as his alibi to cheat on his current wife at the time. We drank while he drove the cable cars and the public buses in his later profession. I later learned that he was also snorting cocaine during that time span. I thought it was cool that he was able to drink and drive. After living with him for one summer, I was exhausted of the drama and scrounging for money. My mom had to literally kidnap me back for me to return to Pennsylvania where I remained to grow up with her.

My mom made me attend church but she did not attend with me. I adored my mother and wanted her to be happy. She was so beautiful and smart. I wanted to be just like her. I became the caretaker of two sisters, 8 and 7 years younger than myself, and a people-pleaser to my mom to gain any sort of emotional connection and approval but she was emotionally unavailable. Growing up in a small predominantly white depressed town and not fitting in with African American girls because I had features and hair texture which revealed I came from a bi-racial mom, caused those girls to despise me. I was an

outcast to them but adored by guys in high school and befriended by my white girl teammates. Better some attention than none, so as a cheerleader I accepted the affections of a white male football player who introduced me to a case of Colt 45, which became my higher power after my first chug. I exhaled and stopped worrying what everyone thought about me and was able to be myself, so I thought.

What it was like and what happened

My mom eventually volunteered and went to a treatment center for 30 days. When she came home she took me with her to AA meetings, but eventually she stopped attending. She told me it was because I told her that a guy hit on me while he was babysitting me. He was the spouse of a woman with whom mom attended AA meetings. I felt like it was my fault that she stopped attending AA for a long time. She started smoking weed again. I remember saying to her, “Didn’t the people at the treatment center say that you couldn’t use any drug?” and her response was I was addicted to Percodan but I can still smoke weed. I knew that was a lie. I became instantly angry, disrespectful and full of resentment. I swore to myself that I would never be like her and neglect my children. I thought after all of the abuse I endured from the age of 5 and on while she was partying and neglecting me, how could she just start using drugs again?

I ran to the boyfriend to smoke marijuana I had stolen from my mother. Although she had returned to college earned a couple of degrees, I held onto that resentment for years and used it to justify my using. I entered into abusive relationships and non/abusive relationships that centered on using drugs and alcohol throughout earning my BA and MS degrees. I survived 6 car accidents as the result of using while driving; situations that could have resulted in prison time, a gun put to my ribs by an abusive drug dealing boyfriend, and served two years of probation for aggravated assault, and the threat of my

mother taking custody of my beautiful fraternal twins which all occurred while under the influence and building a career of short lived positions because of me being an egomaniac with an inferiority complex.

After several escapes from death, jails and institutions, which included two stays at a treatment center, I realized that I had become my mother and worse. Within minutes after my release from my first 28 day treatment stay, I did not take the suggestion to avoid people places and things that would lead me to take a drink or drug because I thought I could manage and handle my living arrangement at home with a using boyfriend. When I arrived, I found a refrigerator full of Old English 800 and cocaine on a plate. He had his cousin in my apartment upon my arrival and told me that they were waiting for me to celebrate. Before I knew it, the insanity set in and I thought if I can't beat 'em then I guess I'll join them. Within a year, I was on the verge of losing my great job and the boyfriend who was in and out of jail for not paying child support to a former girlfriend. I went back to treatment for a second time within a year to avoid losing my job, who through EAP granted me the sick time which I had exhausted. Upon release from this second visit, I returned to a sober environment but was still in the sick relationship based on addiction. Eventually, I learned that I was pregnant by my addicted partner. My job terminated my employment because I had violated a religious contract and excessively missed work. So, I cashed in my retirement fund and moved from the east to the mid-west under a doctor's mandate to be on bed rest for the remaining 3 months of my pregnancy. During this time of rest on a pull-out sofa bed tolerating the smell of my mom smoking marijuana, I had enough sense to reach out to the 800-AA-helpline so that I could stay sober during my pregnancy. A woman with 20 plus years and

her sponsee with 17 years came to my mother's home to read the big book with me every Tuesday just after I would receive a steroid shot to help my twins develop their lungs. The two would smell the aroma of the weed and compliment me on how well I was doing staying sober. Upon reflection, I know that it was God removing the obsession from me so that I would not use. Near the end of my pregnancy, a using girlfriend from back east and I communicated. She would tell me the latest gossip about the father of my children. My mind began to obsess about my other drug of choice at the time, a relationship. I thought if the father of my unborn twins could just see them once they were born, he would want to get sober and we could all be one happy sober family. Instead what happened was I made a promise to my using phone buddy girlfriend that I would wait one month for her to deliver her baby so that we could both smoke a blunt together, which meant I had to move back to the east from the mid-west. Off I went managing my life and practicing insanity while driving premature babies by one month back to my old using stomping grounds. I could not see at the time that I was justifying and rationalizing my insane decision over obsessing about what I wanted; what I thought was best for me and my sons; and what I believed the outcome should be. I fought that just 4-5 months earlier I was moving to the mid-west using a geographical cure to escape insanity, and now I was driving under the influence 10 hours to get back to the insanity without any thought of the risk and harm I caused to my kids, mother and sister/aunts. My hidden motive to reconcile with my children's father went to the wind because he was in and out of jail and rumors surfaced that he was living with his ex-girlfriend/mother of his kid. I stayed with the using girlfriend for a month until I could move into my own place. By the third month of my return, my addiction was so bad and my obsession with trying to hang onto their

father seemed so desperate that I left my kids alone in the housing project to go across town to the raggedy bar to drink and “hang out” with the kids’ dad. I did not want to be left alone out of the fun and using. Well, the boys’ father had someone check on the boys back at the apartment to discover that I had left them alone. I never felt so low in my life. He called me out about what I did in front of people at the bar that I felt had looked up to me at one point but now looked at me with disgust. I was so embarrassed that I lied and insisted that I had a babysitter and that his informant was lying. He explained to me that he knew of babies and people who had burned up in row houses in Philadelphia. He begged me to go home. I finally did and hugged my babies who were asleep in the crib as soon as I go there. I forgot that I had established a pattern of going downstairs to get high with a neighbor while leaving the kids alone in their cribs during their nap time. Four month later, I decided to return back to my family in the mid-west since I had burned all of the bridges with my using friends and my car was repossessed. I was broke and not able to transport twins anywhere. I felt I was ready to surrender that my life was unmanageable and the way to make it better was a geographical cure.

Upon moving back to the mid-west, it did not take long before I manipulated my mom to care for my children often while I found the same people, places and things to continue my obsession with using marijuana and alcohol. This time I would provide weed to my mom for a price. I obtained good positions but always ruined the opportunity to stay and advance because of my absences due to my using and hangovers. I was unreliable, dishonest and irresponsible. Eventually, I had the same experiences as my mother while living in the mid-west and more including being evicted from the former apartments, driving with suspended registration, hooking up with another drug dealer but

the time he was extremely abusive, living in a “welfare motel” with my twins and not being emotionally available to them prior to the age of five.

This horrific lifestyle went on for another 6 years from 1996 to 2002. Having children was not the cure to my addiction. Geographic moves were not changing my addictive behaviors. Being terminated or reorganized out of several good jobs were not enough to realize the consequences of my drinking and drugging. Indirect illnesses as the result of my using were not enough to stop me from using.

I tried to stay sober on my own for 6 months from June 2000 to December 31, 2000, but had an idea to visit an old using buddy on New Year’s Eve 2001, which led to another year and eleven months of using. During that time, I used men for my addiction; I became suicidal but too afraid to do it; I married a man I met at a house party; I was in a fistfight while during a rationalized visit to my hometown under the influence of using drugs and alcohol; and I almost sabotaged earning my doctorate after only being in the academic program for 3 ½ months.

Every day during the week of November 20, 2002, I would vow to stop using and would give all of my alcohol and drugs away to my neighbor. The next day I would be at his door trying to partake or begging my husband to get more. During the first few months of my courtship with my spouse, he vowed to quit drinking with me. I asked him if he would and he said that he did not have a problem. After five days of the vicious cycle of quitting and starting, I decided to go to a Twelve Step program of Alcoholics Anonymous since I knew the solution after two treatment centers and two additional failed attempts to get sober in the rooms. It was on November 25, 2002 that I went to a meeting and picked up my final white chip. I sat in the smoky meeting room, exhaled and

realized just how much God saved me from myself when I was running on self-will. I was exhausted and felt so good to stop fighting and to surrender to the fact that my way wasn't working. It was at that moment that I admitted I am powerless over alcohol and drugs and that my life was unmanageable.

I knew that I was doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results and I was willing to try the way of AA. I thought that my Polish God was tired of my empty repetitive confessions and had given up on me. So in my early recovery, I believe the rooms of AA and my sponsor were my higher power. I also believe that I was an agnostic until I read a book called "Came to Believe" and did a thorough 5th step with a sponsor.

After attending the smoky meeting for one week, a guy named Dick suggested another meeting where I would find women with quality and quantity sobriety. After vomiting my story through a self-pity lens, an older lady came up to me and suggested that I share in a general way. I asked her to be my temporary sponsor and she informed me that she didn't do temporary but that she would sponsor me. She was Jewish but I did not know that at the time. MaryAnn invited me to visit every Tuesday to listen to Joe and Charlie CD's. I fell asleep at 7:10 pm every week until I learned to stay awake.

What MaryAnn did was help me to make the connection between my powerlessness and unmanageability. She helped me realize from sharing her experiences that my behavior was insane and that trying to control my using was not working for me no matter how I tried to rationalize it in my mind. She would say to me, "My hope for you is that your happiness will not be contingent upon people, places and things . . . What other people think of you is none of your business." She would suggest that I call her

when I decided to start thinking because my mind was a bad neighborhood and I should not go there alone.

After 6 months of attending her home group and a women's meeting at a group home, I told my sponsor that I viewed her more as a friend rather than a sponsor and that I decided to let her go. I did not let her go because I wanted her as a friend. I let her go as a sponsor because the truth about me hurt. My attempts to control people, places and things left me angry at her when she pointed out to me my insanity of doing the same things expecting different results. I later realized that I was not angry with her but at myself because I on my own will power could not break my power of insanity. She was a truth teller in my life and until this day, she was the best sponsor I ever had. Not because how she walked me through steps or suggested that I work the program, but because she called me on my bull crap. She made me aware of my defects that required a personality change if I were to remain sober and have a happy, joyous and free life.

As a result of letting go of MaryAnn, I changed my home group to a Saturday night speaker meeting which is where I selected my new sponsor, Linda. She volunteered me to make the coffee for a meeting that served 200 recovering alcoholics. I had to get there 1 hour early in order to make the coffee and set up the room for the speaker meeting. It forced me to speak with others; to become known.

Linda and I really got into the big book and worked the steps. I already knew that I was an alcoholic and an addict but I did not realize that I did not know how to stay stopped. Where MaryAnn, my former sponsor helped me surrender and accept Step 1. Linda had gotten me to Step 2. She had me read Came to Believe and it helped me see all of the times that my Higher Power was saving my life like the Footprints in the sand

poem. Linda helped me to be willing to make a decision to not pick up no matter what. To repeat the Serenity Prayer, call other women, open the literature to any page until the obsession was gone and to get to meetings. She shared her experiences with me which gave me strength and hope to live one day at a time. Linda would ask me which step I applied to a feeling or situation I was experiencing. Then she would suggest the slogans, the Serenity Prayer and the third step prayer in A.A. She was the first sponsor that walked me through the fear of completing the 4th and 5th Steps. I understand the notion of feeling at one with mankind and having a sense of belonging because when I shared my deepest secrets and she shared that she experienced something worse and could relate to my feelings, I no longer felt so much shame and aloneness. When she told me certain things weren't my fault and that the disease was responsible for my horrible behaviors, my guilt was lifted. We read the 6th step and she left me at home to reflect while taking a hot bubble bath. We made a list of people I owed amends and I made owning my part of the street and practicing a living amends more. We moved through the remaining steps with ease. I was already accustomed to prayer and meditation every morning and service work but sponsorship would not come for a couple of years.

After one year of the coffee service commitment, my sponsor volunteered me to be a greeter with her at the door. Little did I know that God was doing for me what I could not do for myself. I got to know newcomers and old-timers. I saw that people kept coming back because they were living the steps of the program. This gave me hope. My sponsor, who was heavily involved in service, inspired me to take on the Inter-Office representative position for our home group. Through this position, attending home group-conscience meetings and assemblies, I observed how people communicated through the

application of the traditions and concepts. I wanted to be able to get along with my family and work colleagues like I had witnessed during these occasions. So, every Sunday my family would have a “family conscience” meeting where people could express concerns and desires that would promote the unity of our family according to the principles behind each step. My fraternal twins were young and had no idea that we were having a “God Conscious” meeting. My family liked it so much that they started calling emergency meetings when an issue came up.

What it is like today

During my first year of recovery: I lost my job, learned that my sons were sexually abused, and I realized my spouse had a pornography/sex problem which resulted in the loss of his job. I believe as a result of developing a conscious contact with my Higher Power through daily prayer and meditation and just the steps, God’s grace allowed me to not pick up a drink or drug.

Upon reflection, I was lucky to hold onto the job I lost as an Associate Dean for as long as I did. I was able to pay our bills for six months into my new life of sobriety. After which, I taught as adjunct faculty which reduced my amount of work stress and gave me time to focus on my recovery program. The loss of that job was a blessing in disguise and God provided for my family.

Today, I practice being a worker among workers and to be of maximum service as a testament to what God did for me that I was unable to do for myself; that is remove my obsession so that I can be of service to others.

Had I not gotten sober, I probably would not have thought to go check on my boys and discover a little girl doing an inappropriate act to them. If I would have been using drugs and alcohol, I would have waited for my kids to just come downstairs.

Because I was sober, I was able to sanely investigate and learn that there was a historical pattern that resulted with my young stepdaughter passing what she learned onto my 5 year old sons. I was able to get them counseling but they still remember. I believe it was divine inspiration that I intuitively knew to go check on them just as I wished my mother would have checked on me while she was partying so I would not have experienced abuse. As a result of this experience, I was able to gain compassion and forgiveness for my mother not saving me from sexual abusers. I now understand now that I have been in her shoes.

Upon returning from my summer residency for my PhD, I learned that my husband had been obsessively viewing pornography. I printed so many pictures of what he viewed on our family computer that the pictures covered every wall on the first floor of our home and the front outside porch wall of our house. When he arrived home to see my decorations, he had justifications and I forgave him. Fast forward and he's taking pictures of a Latino woman's behind at a PTA event. I pray to God to reveal the truth to me because my spouse was good at rationalizing his behavior and I would believe him to keep our family together.

Despite him losing his city job as a result of viewing "inappropriate content" on a city computer which is public record, I believed his rationalizations and enabled his behavior by accepting a position and uprooting our family to Atlanta. God strengthened me to continue to do my doctoral school work and have a great job in an urban Mecca for my kids to develop a strong sense of self.

Fast forward to 2007 and I discover pornography on our family computer again, but this time he blames my boys who are now 11 years old. Because I raised them

according to the traditions of the program and having “God Conscience family meetings” I believed them when they told me it was not them. One night I was inspired to search the computer myself and discovered the final blow of my spouse posting things on a matchmaking website. Some would call this a lack of trust or snooping. I call it learning to trust my gut. Somewhere in the Big Book (the how-to book of recovering alcoholics) it says that deep down inside of everyone is a knowing of Him. I felt inspired and followed my instincts. Intuitively I knew it was time to ask him to leave and that was just before Thanksgiving in 2007. I did not drink or use. I had enough practice working steps 1, 2 and especially 3 that more would be revealed by God.

While he stayed in another state with his mother, he drank and would not communicate with me out of anger from being asked to leave his home. He refused to come be with me while I had a partial hysterectomy. My husband informed me that he was going to stay to help his mom with her knee replacement and to do some sub-contract work writing a grant. By this time, I had six years of practicing the steps. Initially, my mother took care of my sons. Then, I asked for help from my AA women support network. They brought meals and did things with my sons. It was during this event where I learned true humility, seeking God’s will and a dependence on him for my emotional sobriety.

Once my husband had said to me, “It is a burden carrying your burdens and I wish you would get a God of your own understanding.” Well during this separation, I was alone most of the time in a four story home where it was just me and God. I wrote in my journal all of my feelings to God. Many times I cried out to God until I fell asleep because I was afraid that my husband wouldn’t come back even though I am the one who

asked him to leave. I asked God to reveal His Will for me. New Year's was a time that my husband and I were always together but while separated during this New Year's Eve, I was unable to reach him by phone. My gut intuitively knew again that something was not right. I prayed for discernment and for God to reveal the truth. My spouse later told me that he wasn't feeling well and came home. He also mentioned that he had several close calls with death. Once while driving his pick-up truck on ice and another at a bar over a bartender being mad at him for reaching to refill his beer. The latter sounded suspicious but again I prayed for God to reveal the truth to me if what he said was false. I was getting stronger emotionally through my depending on God by seeking his will through prayer and reading Twelve Step program literature. My spouse asked me why I stopped calling and asking him to come back. I shared that I learned I could be okay without him and that maybe we were not meant to be together. This discipline and feeling of emotional sobriety came from God and no one else. After my spouse found my new independence alarming yet attractive, he decided to come home the day AFTER his birthday. He came back on January 25, 2008. Before he crossed the threshold through the front door of our home I asked him if there was anything he wanted to tell me before we gave our marriage another try. He said there was nothing. I said ok. Throughout our marriage, my spouse would write me poetry and make CDs with music as a backdrop to his voice reciting a love letter to me or philosophical thoughts. He wrote, "I would want my last vision to be of you coming down the aisle to take my hand in marriage and the last word on my lips to be your name, Trina."

One day while I was working and talking on my cell phone with my girlfriend, my husband's best friend's wife. A woman called me from my spouse's home state

explaining that she had been having an affair with him. She proceeded to send me pictures via email and described the gifts she gave him for his birthday. The entire time she was on my work phone, I had my girlfriend on my cell phone speaker so she could hear the entire conversation. It just seemed like a drama on TV. After hanging up with the woman and then my girlfriend, I intuitively knew to go to my AL anon sponsor's home. I had been involved in AL anon (a support group for families affected by a loved one actively drinking) for 5 years at the time because 7 months into my recovery, my AA sponsor told me that I needed AL anon because of my husband and growing up in the disease of addiction, or I would surely drink again and to drink was for me to die. After spending 4 hours with my AL anon sponsor and praying for discernment, I decided to go home and confront my husband. When he saw the pictures, he admitted everything. My AA sponsor suspected that my husband was an alcoholic as did I but he thought he was just a problem drinker. So I decided to practice AL anon and forgive him. "You can learn to be happy whether the alcoholic is drinking or not" (AL anon) is what I told myself. Trust was damaged, so he agreed to attend counseling. However, the therapist said after a few sessions that my spouse was so good at applied eastern philosophical approaches that she could not read his emotions and progress in counseling. So she let us go as clients and we never sought a new counselor. I knew to trust God and love my spouse. I believed that God wanted the best for me and more would be revealed.

By August 2008, I lost another job due to a grant ending but I also think I just did not perform up to the best of my ability because I was afraid to ask for guidance and admit I needed on the job training. My spouse was projectile vomiting at the Black Expo in Indianapolis during our separation. He chalked it up to not feeling well instead of to

excessively drinking. He would get out of breath while helping a friend paint during our separation. In addition, he could no longer run the length of the basketball court during a pick-up game of basketball. On August 18, my husband went to a doctor around the corner since he could not get into see our African American doctor. This doctor suggested that he quit smoking cigars, drinking malt liquor and exercise. EKG came back fine. During the last presidential debate on October 15, 2008 my husband complained of something being stuck in his chest. He blamed it on the fact that he had a couple of beers and took a hit of weed from a bong after work. He proceeded to eat ice cream, a banana and go onto the deck to smoke a cigar. After following me upstairs to our bedroom for something to help with acid/indigestion, he proceeded to lie on the sofa in our bedroom. I was in our bathroom getting the medicine when I heard him call my name. I ran to his side only for him to convulse, urinate on himself and sliding off of the sofa in my arms. I called 911 but my husband died. At the time I did not realize that because I was in shock. Upon the arrival of the paramedics and the police, I checked on my kids who did not wake up at all. They slept through the entire event by God's grace. It was 2 am when I climbed into my bed alone after coming home from the hospital.

I thought I would die from grief but I realized at that moment that my solution to dealing with the heart wrenching pain I was feeling was to drive myself to my home-group meeting which met from 7:30am–8:15 am Monday–Friday. I intuitively knew what to do. God's grace helped me avoid a car accident as I drove myself to the meeting in search of emotional relief. I later shared that God did for me what I could not do for myself because I am not sure that I would have divorced my husband. I might have stayed in the insanity which was revealed again to me after his passing. While searching

his email, I found pictures and messages that he planned to violate our vows on my sons' birthday, November 7 and three weeks after he passed away. More was revealed and I never told my boys the truth until this day.

From 2008 until 2009 I grieved, went to meetings, worked with several sponsees and tried to live off of my retirement fund and SSI survivor benefits until I secured an adjunct faculty position at a for-profit an institutional type I despised. This position turned into a full-time job January 2010 where I remained until July 2012. I was very good at teaching and chairing a doctoral program but my self-esteem was low because I allowed colleagues' behaviors and feelings to dictate how I felt and behaved. Other people's opinions of me still mattered. My thoughts and feelings of fear, ignorance and insecurity dictated my behaviors which caused me to act out my defects and not allow me to be a worker among workers. However, this really was the first job that I left on good terms with a good reputation.

I had no idea that I was about to face an even more demanding and heart wrenching season in my life: one of my twin's reactions to his father's death. My fraternal twins turned 12 three weeks after my spouse's death and I had no idea that one of my sons turned to drugs just two weeks after his father's death. I decided to let go of my house. It should have been sold in short sale, but we faced the usual addictive behaviors, mental hospitalization, rehab and outpatient. Then I realized I could not afford my home that I should have let go of when my husband died but wasn't ready to surrender and trust God with that situation. I was trying to use material matters to make my boys feel safe instead of spiritual means like church and their youth group. The outpatient 6 month program was effective but short-lived 4 months into the OP program

for my son because I made a decision to accept a job in West Virginia out of fear of being affected by a RIF as a faculty member. In addition, I had turned down an opportunity with the same institution one month prior to my spouse's passing and did not trust that God would take care of us in Atlanta. I went for the money that was only \$10,000 more for a one-year contract. Upon reflection, I realized I was operating out of fear.

My son had relapsed two times prior to the move out of anxiety about the move but I forged ahead despite the warnings of the outpatient psychologists. He asked that Malik stay in outpatient for two more months, but I thought it was best that Malik be with me rather than staying with his grandmother. I asked everyone's opinion except for God's and when I did, I think I rationalized the move. Financially, I was okay at that time. Eventually, all of my colleagues were terminated or reduced to part time due to the reduction in the workforce.

Today, I still do not know if the move to WV was the right thing for my entire family but I do know that my God does not make mistakes. I had free will and behaved based on fear. My motive was to provide a better career opportunity because my pride felt low working at a for-profit institution in my field. One of my colleagues was hired at a research institution right out of the for-profit. So my fear of being stereotyped and not hirable was just that, 'a fear' without faith that my Higher Power would take care of my outcomes like he always did.

Two months after moving to WV in September 2012, my son relapsed on pills. Four months after relocating to West Virginia in sobriety, November 2012 the left hand was not communicating with the left hand within Bank of America that my home ended up going into foreclosure the day it was supposed to close in the short sale, which

happened to be on my boys' birthday. I did not use. I knew eventually my credit would be restored. December – January 2013, my son started shooting heroin. By March he was sober for two consecutive month stints with a relapse in between the two. October – December 2013 he was placed in a youth rehabilitation and graduated from the program. Six months later, June 2014 he relapsed before starting a host job at a good restaurant and I did not know until after he picked up his one year coin when he admitted he relapsed after I asked him if he was using again. I was concerned back in May 2014 because his meeting attendance decreased during track season but I prayed to God for more to be revealed. What I did not realize until the past few months is that I was taking more responsibility for his recovery than he was for the 5th time.

I have been praying and meditating daily now, sponsoring several women, got a new sponsor within my state from them. I started an AL anon meeting using conference approved literature based on the solution.

I love the Families Anonymous but most importantly, I have started reading and studying the Serenity Prayer and the Bible. I have placed my son in the care of God. I pray for him every day. My son just picked up a charge of possession and paraphernalia. The judge dropped the possession charge and wished my son the best at his prestigious college next year.

My son did not tell the judge that he recently received a rejection letter from the university. I decided to surrender my son to God, because he is capable of taking care of Malik. His outcome will be better for him whether it's in heaven with God or in sobriety. I accept that institutions, jail or death are what happens without me or any addict working the steps to develop a relationship with a God of our understanding. I understand that I

have a daily reprieve based on whether or not I am spiritually fit as a result of practicing the steps one day at a time. I am grateful for that I depend on my higher power for guidance and strength. I treasure my sobriety, sanity and recovery. This story of recovery, and use of the Twelve Step Program, details the journey from beginning until the present day.

The next story is from Bev Mc. who I originally met in Brooklyn; it was about twenty-eight years ago. I was attending church after a long absence from organized religion. We, my husband and I, had a baby boy. It was a second marriage for each of us and the fourth child between us. It was the beginning of a new life for us. While attending church, the Assistant to the Pastor, Rev. B. requested that a missionary, or two, make visits to my house to give me a few hours of relief in caring for my new born. Bev Mc's. Mother came. It was through her, that I met Bev Mc and her family. We remain friends today.

My Story of Healing - Bev Mc

I was born in Slidell, Louisiana, and the middle child of 5 siblings. My dad drank until he couldn't take care of his family anymore. My grandmother sent for my mom and her children to live with her in New York, so she could help to take care of us. I was only 5 years old when we moved to New York. I had what would be called a typical childhood. As I grew older and started Middle School I realized my self-esteem was not good. I didn't feel like I fit with the rest of the kids. I was pretty shy and very self-conscious. Seem like the other kids could do things better than me and I was not included in many things.

My first drink was at a hooky party. I went into a black out or passed out and couldn't remember anything. Passing out and or blacking out would be how I would drink for the rest of my drinking career. I got pregnant at that hooky party by someone I didn't know. I was 14 at the time. The guy denied that he was the father and that was going to be my first experience with rejection big time. My mom sent me to live with my married sister. I felt my mother didn't love me and was ashamed of me is why she sent me away. After I had my son, I tried to go to back to school for the next two years, but I was behind a grade and my self-esteem would not allow me to. I found some kids who was cutting class and drinking and I got involved with them. I finally dropped out of school and got a job.

On my first job as a typist I started drinking on my lunch hour and would come back to work tipsy. Finally, I was let go. My next job was on Wall Street. I felt for the first time my family was proud of me. I decided that I would not drink on my lunch hour on this job. I worked there for a couple of years and then went to work for my sister in her Daycare Center. This gave me more freedom to drink and my drinking really escalated. I loved drinking. I really drank for the effect. I loved the way it made me feel. It helped me to suppress my feelings and I could really fit in with the in crowd and talk to the guys. I also thought drinking helped me with solving my problems because I thought clearer. I also had become an angry person when I drank. I blamed a lot of what I was going thru on my mother.

My drinking began to turn on me. Many visits to the emergency room and finally I came down with acute pancreatitis. I was 24 years old. I stopped drinking, but substituted the drinking with smoking reefer. I got married but could not live a normal

life. I was a dry drunk because I didn't know how to change my attitude and behavior. I was still a very angry person and especially angry with my mother and husband. My marriage went bad and my husband left after ten years.

I picked up drinking again not realizing that I would take me on a two year run where as I was drinking every day. I really did not understand alcoholism. During this time not only was I separated from my husband, but I lost my three brothers. I also lost my job. I wanted to die. My bedroom had become my Bowery.

I had a brother who was in the program and was suggesting that I come into Alcoholics Anonymous. My brother died in July of 1986. I had cried out to God to please help me and he answered my prayers. I came into the program in September 1986. At my first meeting there was a woman sharing about getting pregnant at the age of 14 which is what had happen to me. I had kept that a secret for years from my co-workers. She was sharing my secret! I knew I belonged. I never talked about my feelings. There were many times I couldn't even identify my feelings.

In AA I did what was suggested and got a sponsor and a home group and over time begin to develop a network of women friends. My first sponsor got me involved in the big book and the steps, which is the program. The steps were what helped me to begin to change. I passed that on to my sponsees. I was able to see many things about myself I was not aware of, like my relationships to God, myself and other people. I found out I needed to change everything about myself. What else helped me grow and change was my involvement with a woman's retreat group and a woman's meeting. I also got involved in service at the group level very early in recovery and service was to become

essential to my recovery. Sponsorship, taking meetings to institutions and chairing detoxes.

I found out that my mother did love me and had a similar experience with teen pregnancy like I did. My mother told me that her mother seldom told her that she loved her so she didn't have that to pass on. Now she does. My mother is 92 and I speak to her often and we tell each other how much we love each other. I really do. [Bev Mc.'s Mother passed on December 13, 2014, peacefully in her sleep.]

My relationship with a God of my own understanding is so essential to my continued healing and spiritual well-being. I try to pray and meditate in the morning and talk with God throughout the day. I try not to make any decisions without talking with my Higher Power first. I'm in a Bible study class, which I thank God every day that I'm studying his word. I married a fellow AA member and we have been happily married now for 21 years. AA allowed both us to go back to school and get our degrees. What I'm grateful for also is that my husband recently started going to church with me on Sundays. In 2011 we both retired and relocated to Myrtle Beach, SC. AA opened up their arms to us in SC. We continued to make meetings and do service in AA like we did in New York.

This year, in April 2014, I was diagnosed with lung cancer. My first reaction was fear and hurt which caused me to cry a lot. I prayed and asked God to heal me. God spoke to my heart and said He would not give me more than I can handle and that He would heal me. The get well cards, text messages, phone calls and meetings my sponsor and friends from my AA group brought to my house when I was too ill to make meetings reassured me of God's love. God works through people.

I realized that God has been healing me by his grace since the first day I walked into Alcoholics Anonymous in 1986, 28 years ago. He continues to heal me each and every day especially when I'm sharing my experience, strength and hope with others.

The next story is from a woman who I met in Junior High School. I didn't like her. She was short, cute, well, dressed and appeared very popular. We went to the same high school and most interestingly, we drank together, not during and after high school, but during junior high school as well! When I was ninety days into recovery, we met on a subway station; she was working for transit and I was getting off the train to go to a doctor's appointment on the Upper East Side of New York. It was by divine intervention that we met again. During one of our nights out, a number of us had been drinking and we were 18 or nineteen years old. I had a secret that one of our friends told me. And she told me not to tell; however, I told Nameless from PA. She told everyone who was at our get together. The young woman stopped speaking to me as I betrayed her trust. I held a rage within me for Nameless PA for years. When I saw her again, it all came back to me.

I was cordial and polite. We exchanged phone numbers and addresses. We met and started to develop a new relationship. She and her husband are our son's Godparents and we remain, very close friends. Here is her story.

“Nameless - PA.”

I was born in the Bronx, New York in December 1948 and raised in a two parent family. I can honestly say, I don't remember ever going without any of the three basic things that mothers and fathers felt they were responsible for providing to making us a family; this was food, clothing and a roof over our heads. Much later in life, I realized that my parents, both didn't have a clue. My mother lost her mom when she was two

years old and she was the baby of the family. Now with four children and a widower, my grandfather went to work as a Pullman Porter on the Railroad to support his children. Consequently he was away from home for long periods of time; I just learned from a family member that after taking care of his household obligations whatever monies were left were spent on women and drinking.

My father was raised by his mother who was also a single parent; but she was a successful owner of a restaurant/bar, “juke joint” in the South. The only thing he learned from his mother about what makes one a man growing up was that you were considered a man when you provide food on the table and a roof over your family’s head which he always did. My father was an alcoholic who became a raging, violent drunk when he picked up a drink. My mother was a love starved woman who truly loved her two children but in every other aspect of her life was lonely and miserable. She was afraid of her husband and always fearful that without him she couldn’t provide a life for her two children. She wanted them to have a better life than she had being raised by older siblings and an absentee father. She longed for a normal, happy home and family. So fortunately, she suffered and put up with a frustrated, raging abusive husband for over twenty-five years. I believe in my heart that she didn’t know what this was doing to her, my brother and me.

Children learn more from what they see rather than what you tell them. So by the age of thirteen years old, I became a chameleon. I became anything the situation called for outside of my home. If I were with the bad girls, I could be one; if I was with the good girls at the church, I became one too. All my friends’ parents loved me for my so called outgoing and aggressive personality. At home, I was learning to always be on the

defensive because, I never ever wanted to be like my mother who in my eyes was a beautiful but fearful, battered weak woman. This is where I learned to always have my guard up. Nobody was going to abuse me! I was going to get you before you get me! Well, that's what I thought in my mind, and that's how it was UNTIL I picked up my first drink.

Everything I said I wouldn't allow or accept from anyone; I swore I would do anything that would protect me from being abused. My drinking career started from the age of nine until my last drink at the age of 24 years. My progression was fast, I went from being this happy go lucky, life of the party girl to an angry nasty falling down drunk. I never knew what I would do or say after the first drink because I was a blackout drinker. At first, I didn't believe anyone who would tell me what I had done. I would say, "Oh, he or she was lying on me." Then I became embarrassed and defensive and I would try to justify my behavior with excuses like, "Well, they deserved it because ..." I had no clue of what people were thinking about or saying about me. All I knew is I began to feel tremendous amounts of shame and guilt all the time and I started questioning myself. At some point, drinking didn't make me feel good anymore.

I started "sneaky drinking" and drinking alone. If I were alone, nobody could complain or comment on my behavior. But that didn't last because after a few drinks alone, I would call people and forget what I said. I would go out and a lot of times, more times than I care to count, I would wake up in, "Strange places and looking at strange faces." That was not the life I wanted and deep down inside of me, I knew it wasn't the life my mother wanted for me.

My Story of recovery began at the point where nothing was working to take away the pain I was in. I was in the lowest point I had ever been in my life. I prayed every night to not wake up and every morning I woke up, I felt despair of what my life had become. It felt like someone kicked me in my gut. I never associated the fact that my life circumstances were connected to alcohol and if I didn't drink I possibly could have a chance for a better life.

I didn't know any alcoholics, I knew drunks and winos, and the few drug addicts in the neighborhood never bothered anyone. I never knew anyone in a recovery program. My family despised weakness and let us know that under no circumstances do you air your dirty laundry. There was an absence of God in my family. So much so, that as a young person I remember having two personalities, in public you saw this girl what was very sensitive and had it together; but inside I always felt I was missing something that others had. I learned to wear a mask at a very young age.

At the age of 22 I lost my mom to cervical cancer, she was 42 years old. In less than two years I hit rock bottom and on August 3, 1974, I called intergroup of Alcoholic Anonymous for help. On that Monday night, I walked into my first meeting which was the Gratitude Group of AA. By the Grace of God, I have not had a drink since. Everything I needed to get sober was at my disposal. People welcomed me with open hearts and hands. They told me if I was sick and tired of being sick and tired, I was in the right place. I was given a meeting book and some phone numbers. It was suggested that I make 90 meetings in 90 days and if I was not satisfied with how I was feeling my misery would be refunded.

Of course I didn't have a clue about what they meant, but I did listen to the speakers and I could identify with the feelings; their pain was my pain. I never heard anyone talk about themselves and the things they did because of a disease. I would be given tools to help me stay sober. I liked that and I wanted to know more. What I didn't know was that it was a process and it was going to take time. I had done a lot of damage to myself, my nervous system was shot and I had so much anxiety around people it was extremely hard to hold a cup of coffee without my hand shaking.

I know now that my Higher Power was with me and was guiding me. I had not had or wanted any part of God in my life because I blamed Him for allowing the bad things in my life. The biggest one was my mother dying. Each day I didn't drink and went to a Twelve Step meeting I started desiring to live more than I wanted to die. When I didn't understand what people were saying at meetings I just kept coming back because that Power was within me, kept pushing me and I believe today "loving" me until I could learn to love myself!

Today, 40 plus years later that Power is God and all the people in the Twelve Step program of Alcoholic Anonymous keep pushing me and loving me. This was the key to Recovery for me, identifying the core of my defects which I learned I had plenty. After putting the drink down I could no longer deal with life as I had in the past which was to take a drink and hide. The act of living sober required action. I had to take the second and third steps or I would drink again. The God of my childhood was loving and protective of me I started to pray for that relationship which I lost somewhere in High School years. I started believing in the stories I heard other sober alcoholics tell of being restored by their higher power. Again I heard I wasn't a bad person , I was a person who had a disease and

if I had faith and turned over my defects to the God of my understanding He would do for me what no one else could. I believed it. My recovery was based on a daily conscious contact with my Higher Power. I let go of my will and my way of dealing with things and accepting that was in charge of my life.

It is so interesting, that none of the three women, nor I went to the organized church to find healing and relief from our disabilities. But through the caring, and the Twelve Step program, each of us became united or reunited with a God of our understanding. “So, through practicing these Steps, we had a spiritual awakening about which finally there were no questions.”⁵⁰ We can see the change set in. From great numbers of such experiences, we can predict that the doubter who still disavows a higher power, and will begin to change and accept the love of God as the one, the only healer.

The Twelve Step program is Pastoral Care at its best.

If we are painstaking about our spiritual development, we will be amazed before we are half way through the course. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness in living through and walking in our purpose. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We can only learn from life’s lessons. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter far down the scale we have gone and how far away we have strayed from being in relationship with the God of our understanding, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interesting in our neighbors. We will learn to love the Lord and love our neighbors as ourselves. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. They

⁵⁰ *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, 109.

are being fulfilled among us-sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. God could and would if He were sought.⁵¹

⁵¹ *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 84.

CHAPTER 8

NEXT STEPS/ PASTORAL CARE GUIDE

OurStories is a pastoral care and wellness ministry that fits our African American Church and Community. It fits because the program is non-threatening and as we established it, it has become a safe place to share. At Calvary Fellowship AME Church our pastoral care ministry is called the Emotional Support Group.

We'll find the next step is in the story:

A friend of mine called to talk. It seems that she is overwhelmed with life pressures and instead of suppressing her feelings; she decided to share her frustrations. I believe that Gloria is quite familiar with the Twelve Step Program. We met over twenty years ago when I was a teacher in a Bedford Stuyvesant school. Her mother was my supervisor. One morning, Gloria's mother came into the office and broke down in tears. It seems that her daughter Gloria was using drugs and drinking and Gloria's mother did not know what to do. Frankly, neither did I. I gave her my phone number and asked that if Gloria needed an "ear to listen" I could do that. I said to myself that she would never call. To my surprise, she called the next day. We began a relationship, where I shared my experience, strength and hope to lead a different life without the use and the abuse of drugs. I invited her to church, where I found my source of strength and we became running partners. We eventually attended Twelve Steps meetings.

Gloria says that she "found" the God of her understanding and through it all, she stopped drinking and drugging, ended her abusive relationship with her then male friend,

became a present mother to her two adolescent children and she matured into the person who she desired to be. She also found a church home where she chose to worship and became active in a dance ministry.

Her pastor took notice of her restoration from the pits of the “wounded” and asked if she would start a program within her church for people like herself, who became victorious over substance abuse and sought help and direction of a healing God. She says to me that she doesn’t know what to do or how to start. Look at God!

There are no coincidences. Over the last fifteen years Gloria and my relationship become distant; however, we would run into each other as our circles of friends, support groups and church functions would overlap and interact. Gloria is learning the valuable lessons of life and continues to use the tools of the Twelve Step program.

Now, she needs to talk. Her daughter became a mother who needed help. The system of Child Welfare removed her children and placed them with Gloria and her husband for a little over two years. Gloria took a short leave of absence from her position with the City. With the help of her Twelve Step program and the intervention of the Lord, they were able to ride the turbulence and come out on the other side. Several months ago, the children went back to their mother. Gloria felt relieved for a while, but missed her grandchildren’s presence in her home. A little stronger and wiser, Gloria became a role model for her children, her grandchildren, her emotional supporters and her church community.

Now she is faced with another challenge; her husband was diagnosed with prostate cancer and it is now in remission. He was recently diagnosed with liver cancer and in need of a liver transplant. Gloria called me as she needed to talk.

The interesting thing about the Twelve Step Program is that there is no graduation; we continue to apply the principles in all our affairs and we can involve ourselves at any point when the need is necessary. The process is going to take as long as it takes; when we begin is totally up to the participant.

When the Lord heals us, I believe that He heals us for His purpose. As this is only a suggestion, Gloria can wrestle with the Will of God in her life; she can get help from further working the 3rd Step and she may consider going to a counseling center which can further analyze her needs. I believe that she now is ready to start the program that her pastor wants her to start.

The Pastoral Care model, also known as the Emotional Support Group, that was developed in Calvary Fellowship AME, provides a safe place to share unsafe issues and become healed with a combination of the sharing and caring of the Narrative Pastoral model and the Twelve Step Program of recovery; it should be sustained as long as it is peopled by the faith-based organization members and the community which supports it. There may be a need for other faith-based organizations as demonstrated by the illustration above. I will present this model to our Presiding Elder of the Brooklyn-Westchester District of the First Episcopal District. There are nineteen churches in the Brooklyn-Westchester District and to my knowledge there is no group meeting of this kind.

I started our program through a process of workshops, Bible study, preaching assignments and announcements by way of our Sunday bulletin and word of mouth. The pastor of our church allowed me great flexibility in pulling the program together.

“God Cares Ministry”

Preparing for the Ministry

- Confer with the pastor to determine if there is a need for such a program – A safe place to share unsafe issues.
- A facilitator who is or can become knowledgeable with a Twelve Step Program and is willing to interact with the Twelve Steps/Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous for information
- Form a small committee of volunteers who will agree to participate in the grass roots process and provide a foundation for the group
- Determine a time and location within the church building that would satisfy the church’s calendar; a private and non-public place where those who need help will feel that their stories will not be shared with passers-by; determine the frequencies of the meetings in order to review and discuss the book’s information
- Ask for volunteers to contribute/donate for their personal copy of *The Twelve Steps: A Spiritual Journey, A Working Guide for Healing Damaged Emotions, revised Edition; Based on Biblical Teachings*. The purchase price is approximately \$15.95.
- The facilitator (s) must familiarize themselves with the disclaimer:

This book is designed to provide information regarding the subject matter covered. It is provided with the understanding that the publisher and author are not engaged in rendering individualized professional services. These processes and questions are intended for group or individual study, and not designed to be a substitute for one-to-one professional therapy when such help is necessary”

- Read and familiarize oneself with suggested readings:
- Christian Roots of the Twelve Steps
- The Twelve Steps and Spiritual Disciples

- It is advisable to develop a bank of mental health resources in the area in which the meetings are to take place.

Advertise the Ministry

- Create informational Flyers
- Have the pastor or another qualified minister to preach on the matter of healing; storytelling; and/or God's Will in one's life. I personally preached a sermon on the 23rd Psalm outlining David's story. I also used the book, *God's Psychiatry* by Charles L. Allen, pages 15-38, to support the Biblical Study on the 23rd Psalm.
- This could be followed up with a handout:
- The Good Shepard – Psalm 23

After listening to the presentation on the 23rd Psalm, please choose words from this list or whatever words that you wish to complete the blanks.

Comfort	evil	Lord	rod	table	death
Cup	goodness	mercy	sake	valley	enemies
Days	green	house	oil	shepherd	walk
Lie	pastures	paths	soul	still	want
Waters	friends	move	waters	transform	move

_____ is my _____ I shall not _____
 She /He makes me _____ down. She /He leads me besides _____
 _____ She/ He restores my _____. She/ He leads me in the
 _____ of right thinking for Her/ His name _____
 Yeah, though I _____ through the _____ of the
 path of _____, I will fear no _____ for You
 are with me. Your _____ and Your staff they _____ me.
 You prepare a _____ before me in the presence of my _____
 You anoint my head with _____; my _____ runs over
 Surely _____ and _____ shall follow me all the _____
 Of my life; and I will dwell in the _____ of the Lord forever. Amen

It is suggested that this activity is reviewed during the next Bible Study making the participants aware that additional workshops are available as illustrated on the flyer below.

On the day of the meeting a suggested format is as such:

Open the Meeting

Agenda

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as a pathway to peace; taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with you forever in the next. – Reinhold Niebuhr

Things to do

9:30 -9:59 am Meet, greet and eat

10:-10:30 am Read & Discuss the Step

10:31-11:25am Self Care through Reflections

11:26 -11:30 am Closing prayer and concerns

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven; Give up this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever.-Matthew 6:9-13

The agenda is not duplicated for distribution. Writing Instruments can be distributed for use in the workbooks or personal paper pads. However, nothing written by the participants is collected. This provides a spirit of privacy. “Whatever is shared here stays here.”

Additional guidelines of the meeting can be determined during the meeting after the meeting with the grassroots committee and can be reviewed after each meeting.

Be encouraged and God bless the ministry.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROPOSAL

**OURSTORIES:
A PASTORAL CARE & WELLNESS MINISTRY THAT FITS OUR
AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH AND COMMUNITY**

By

CARMEN H. WALSTON

A DEMONSTRATION PROPOSAL

New York Theological Seminary

April 1, 2014

Challenge Statement

As an African Methodist Episcopal female minister in Calvary Fellowship Church located in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, I am concerned by the care system that currently is available to members of my congregation and community. I want to create, through this demonstration project, a pastoral care system for church and community members to share life's concerns. This model will give voice to wounded people, begin a healing process and develop their spiritual maturity.

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CHAPTER 1 **INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING**

The white church on the corner of Herkimer Street and Rochester Avenue looks like any tradition country church and therefore, appears misplaced in the urban, Bedford-Stuyvesant community of Brooklyn. The church has a steeple and is surrounded by a newly painted wrought iron fence. The small piece of land that stretches from the community garden to the back of the church is spotted with bits of grass and the soil is exposed. When it rains pools of mud are created. If one is not careful, the entire foot can sink into the mud.

The marquee at the front of the church, which identifies the preacher for Sunday, pastor of the church, presiding elder of the area and the conference bishop is one consisting of individual letters put together to advertise the activities of the church. It is not colorful or digital. When driving or walking by, one might certainly miss the information posted on it.

Calvary-Fellowship is one of three A.M.E. churches in the immediate Bedford Stuyvesant area. For decades, Bedford Stuyvesant has been a cultural center for Brooklyn's black population.¹ The setting and culture of this church represents the neighborhood of the past with congregants waiting for the future to happen to them. However, there may be an element missing as the congregation moves toward the 21st century church. Those who come to the church, come because there is a need that is not

¹ Matias Echanove, "Bed Stuy, On the Move," Master's thesis, Columbia University, 2003.

being fulfilled in their lives. Many come to the church, as a last resort, to see the pastor and to have the pastor, or any available minister fix whatever is wrong. Edward P. Wimberly states in his book, *Pastoral Care in the Black Church* that the definition of pastoral care must be re-examined and must be given a clear definition of the functions of pastoral care.²

The older parishioners of the church are afraid that their family's congregational roots will be lost as family members die and the children move away. On major church events, sometimes these sons and daughters return in support of their parents and grandparents. Many returning adult children report that they grew up in Calvary, have fond memories of childhood activities and now have joined other churches.

Community members see the traditional church building, hear the rocking music, walk in and attempt to become a part of whatever is going on. The new attendees come to the church expecting to feel wanted and natured. They are looking for a quick fix: a healing — mental, physical or emotional; maybe even spiritual. If this cannot be accomplished, they look for a way to go through the immediate crisis; they may also look to establish a relationship with God and other persons.³

“Pastoral caregivers represent a God who is aligned ‘against the forces of future-less-ness.’ Despair can be seen as an enemy, and pastoral caregivers bring their knowledge and skills into combat against it.”⁴ Andrew D. Lester also states that parishioners see the pastor as “a hope” based on the promises of God. “A new future is

² Edward P. Wimberly, *Pastoral Care in the Black Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1979).

³ Ibid., 18-19

⁴ Andrew D. Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 2.

always available and that numerous possibilities exist in every present circumstance.”⁵ Parishioners come with stories that they want heard. They grab the senior pastor or any other minister who will listen, to receive a glimmer of hope for the future, a blessing or advice. There is not enough time after the worship service or enough privacy.

The church has volumes of stories and testimonies that yearn to be heard. In all fairness, the senior pastor and other ministers cannot handle all the personal accounts and effectively teach and preach the Word of God. Therefore, this demonstration project will establish a model of a pastoral care ministry that allows the parishioner to tell their story to the ambassador from God.

⁵ Ibid., 2-3.

CHAPTER 2

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGE

As an African Methodist Episcopal female minister in Calvary Fellowship Church located in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, I am concerned by the care system that currently is available to members of my congregation and community. I want to create, through this demonstration project, a pastoral care system for church and community members to share life's concerns. This model will give voice to wounded people, begin a healing process and develop their spiritual maturity.

There is always a story. As a Christian and a minister in a denominational church, I am actively involved with my spiritual and biblical growth and concerned with that to which I minister. I desire to experience a personal and satisfying relationship with the God of my understanding; and through discussions with other members of the congregation, I understand that they, too, are looking for the similar things, for healing and comfort.

A plan should be put in place to address the needs of the parishioners. Why not develop a plan and begin with the leadership recalling their stories for Spiritual Renewal?⁶

Another realization is that many persons, men and women of the church and the community want to talk to me — the minister, and tell their stories about personal experiences of despair, hopelessness, fear, death and loss, anger, rejection, depression; drug and alcohol addictions; the betrayal of a spouse/significant other; or the abandonment of parents. There is always a story. Many times there is a desperate or

⁶ Edward P. Wimberly, *Recalling Our Own Stories, Spiritual Renewal for Religious Caregivers* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977).

dramatic story and a real desire to “find” God in the tragedy. The questions are: Why did God let this happen or when is God going to fix it? For example, there is the story of healing concerning the Smith family.

Ms. Smith is a fifty-plus, working grandmother who is raising her eighteen year old grandson, Sam. Sam is a member of a gang. They live in the project houses⁷ located diagonally across the street from the church.

One day, in early September 2009, after spending his first day back in the neighborhood high school, her grandson walked to the “circle” – mini-mall in Bedford Stuyvesant. Sam became involved in a verbal altercation with some members of a rival gang. He ran. The rival gang members caught up with him and someone shot Sam in the back. Sam fell on the street, approximately fifty feet away from the front door of his building, mortally wounded. The closed church witnessed the tragedy in silence; however, our eventual response was to the community. We served the community and had services in the church. Sam had never set foot in the church. We offered grief counseling, prayer and shoulders to cry upon. For the next three years, on the anniversary of Sam’s death, at the family’s request, a memorial service was held. Grandmother Smith raised money from the family, church community, and friends for two scholarships. She contributed it to the high school that Sam would have attended. Our sense of loss comes from cataclysmic events that happen about in the community. In situations like this, we normally give permission to people to grieve – at least for a season.⁷

In my training as a Christian minister, I listened and referenced scriptures to which the “counselor” could often refer. Grandmother Smith brought her younger

⁷ Peter Scazzero and Warren Bird, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship that Actually Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 154.

grandson to church; however, he does not attend on a regular basis. “The sad truth is that there is little difference between God’s people inside the church and those outside the church who claim no relationship to Jesus Christ.”⁸

Grandmother Smith still attends, has become a missionary and has generally become more participatory in the church-related events.

Therefore, some are healed from the damaged emotions and thus their outlook on life changes because their mindset changes. The challenge is to share our experiences and develop our characters so that there is a foundation on which to build emotional stability and a reliance on our spiritual nature.

⁸ Scazzero and Bird, *Emotionally Healthy Church*, 17.

CHAPTER 3

PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Develop awareness in Calvary Church that changes can occur in one's faith development, spiritual awareness, insight, sensitivity, and greater self-acceptance⁹ when a person self-discloses.

- **Strategy 1:** Present a workshop study on counseling with a general questionnaire concerning pastoral care and the counseling ministry. (Selected clips of *Passion of the Christ*-video)
- **Strategy 2:** Present a follow-up workshop and a second questionnaire to those who respond to the need of a pastoral care. This questionnaire would address an area of concern. For example, "How would you counsel Judas?"

Evaluation: Have a return of twenty percent of participants to complete the questionnaire.

Goal 2: Recruit seven community members and/or congregants of the sample group to participate in the documentation of their personal stories; and through group discussion, disclose how "telling their stories" and not suppressing it has had an effect on their lives.

- **Strategy 1:** Provide a safe physical place to share personal stories in order to create trust. Create an outlet to encourage journaling.
- **Strategy 2:** Enlist and train a social worker and pastoral care specialists to serve as counselors

⁹ New York Theological Seminary, "Doctor of Ministry Program, Goal Specification and Strategy Development," 43.

- **Strategy 3:** Provide notebooks and topics for the participants to note their interests, their self-disclosures and provide “healing scriptures.”
- **Strategy 4:** Provide two hour seminars; one for each month between April 2014 and September 2014 to provide information on topics under which participants concerns may fall

Evaluation: To provide a data base of anonymous volunteers to participate in the workshops in order to create the documented stories.

Goal 3: Create a procedure on the steps to develop a pastoral care ministry including samples of personal stories

- **Strategy 1:** Provide the action steps that it takes to begin a pastoral wellness ministry. Enlist the aid of a pastoral care worker from Emmanuel Baptist Church.
- **Strategy 2:** Research the authorities that support the necessary steps to create an effective program and referral services.

Evaluation of Goal 3: Develop a guide that defines a pastoral wellness ministry, with supporting documentation and personal “OurStories” to share its experience, strength and hope with all who desire to be healed.¹⁰

¹⁰ *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 3rd ed. (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services), 58.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Historical

What is the historical system used in the Black church where pastoral counseling is done? Edward Wimberly states: "Pastoral Care is very much a part of black church tradition, although its emphasis may be different from that which is practiced in mainline white Protestantism today."¹¹

Biblical/Theological

What are the Biblical understandings of healing? What does God say about healing? What is the prophetic nature of healing? In Acts 9: 36-43, a female discipline named Tabitha (Dorcas) is found. She ministered to others from her resources and talents. While she was a caregiver, she was given a physical and spiritual healing; when she was in need she experienced a resurrection and the new church experienced a revival.¹²

Social Justice

How can we enlist additional resources in the Brooklyn area/Bedford Stuyvesant community that could help those who are wounded and discouraged? What steps do we take to develop a referral network for the hopeless?

¹¹ Wimberly, *Pastoral Care in the Black Church*, 10.

¹² Herbert Lockeyer, *All the Women of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1967), 46-48.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION PROCESS

Method of evaluation 1

In April 2014-through September 2014 candidate will organize and develop a program manual that procedurally organizes and develops a pastoral ministry program.

Method of evaluation 2

Fifty percent, three, of the volunteers/participants will document their journeys through a ninety day healing process. The documents will serve as “OurStories: A Journey to Wellness” to support the pastoral ministry manual.

CHAPTER 6 **MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES**

The Process

The tentative Site Team members involved are the:

Reverend Mashona Davis, Master of Divinity and Chaplain of the Veterans Association, Ossining, New York; Minister to Youth, Calvary-Fellowship A.M.E. Church
Ms. Francine Simmons, Steward; Calvary-Fellowship A.M.E. Church;
Ms. Esther Delaney, Trustee; Calvary-Fellowship A.M.E. Church;
Ms. Tula Lacy, Masters in Social Work and licensed Social Worker;
Reverend Joseph Walston, pastor of Calvary-Fellowship A.M.E. Church;
Reverend Doctor Richard McEachern, D. Min. Pastor of Macedonia A.M.E. Church; “Religiosity to Biblical Spirituality Transformation”-Advisory Board
Reverend Ellen Canty-McEachern, M.Div. CPE Specialist, Associate Minister and Assistant to the pastor, Macedonia A.M.E. Church
Reverend Cheryl Auguste, M.Div., Associate Minister to Christian Education, Bridge Street A.W.M.E. Church; Advisory Board

At various informal one on one and group meetings, my site team members received a draft copy of my revised challenge statement. I emailed copies of the competencies to them and asked that they complete the answers and forward the documents to me with their feedback.

A summary of the Site Team’s evaluations and my assessments of the ministerial competencies follow. The two competencies that I will personally develop are counselor and administrator.

The Assessments

Theologian – Rev. Carmen is a committed student to biblical and scriptural studies and works hard to enable others to grow spiritually. The Candidate brought programs into the church and initiated discussion on emotional wellness as part of our spiritual discipline. This competency is seen when she teaches Church School classes. She constantly shows her persistent thirst for education and deeper understanding of the scripture and their application to life. Continue. *I agree with this assessment.*

Preacher/Interpreter of Sacred Texts – Rev. Carmen has the ability to organize material effectively. In this area the Candidate is highly effective and on-time for the times we are living. Her sermons not only have the traditional hallmarks of good preaching; but also touch on emotional wellness for today. For example, over a decade ago the Candidate preached: “If God Provides the Vision, He will provide the Provision.” That sermon sticks with me. This competency is seen when Rev. Carmen occasionally preaches in my local church. Each time she enters the pulpit to deliver the Word, it is apparent that a great deal of effort put into her sermons. They are all well-organized, inspirational, and scripturally-based and delivered with passion. Continue. *I agree with this assessment, however, I will work at developing my sermons to reach the more contemporary audience.*

Worship Leader – Rev. Carmen is able to frame worship appropriately within the sacred calendar. Currently this candidate serves as priestly worship leader for the congregation. For example, the congregation needed to attend a second service a distance away. The candidate successfully moved the service along while keeping the feel of worship. However, the candidate needs to develop in this area due to the shifting demographics of

the congregation and community. How does one lead worship in a way that is meaningful and lively across generations? This competency is seen when Reverend Carmen effectively assists the Pastor with worship experience as need. Continue/Develop. *I will develop my worship leadership skills to include the younger audience.*

Prophetic Agent – Rev. Carmen has the ability to communicate to others a passion for social justice change. She exhibits a commitment to transforming the world. She needs to continue to increase skills to understand and to communicate an awareness of social justice. The Candidate has powerful gifts in this area: particularly as it relates to women. However, the candidate sometimes does not speak up aggressively enough. Recently the candidate handled a critical situation with one of the youth in the church with such tact and Godly love that I was honored to be in her presence. I felt like shouting, “we need more of this in the church!” Women want and need to hear what thus says the Lord through this candidate. Develop. This competency is seen when Reverend Carmen facilitates the construction of an effective support group in the Church. This illustrates her compassion for all people including those in the community and anyone seeking guidance. Continue. *I agree with this assessment.*

Leader – Rev. Carmen shows an ability to communicate an overall sense of direction and to enable others to accomplish it. Continue. The candidate functions well in all above. As stated in previous competency, the candidate should develop in willingness to share knowledge and resources and giving constructive criticism. This competency is seen when Reverend Carmen serves as a leader and advisor to some of the groups in the church such as the Missionary Society and the Women’s Ministry. She consistently

provides effective leadership with respect and integrity. Continue. *I agree with this assessment.*

Religious Educator – Rev. Carmen has the ability to prepare and communicate subject matter. Continue. This is an area where this candidate shines! I have attended several of her Bible Study series and they have been outstanding. I have even adopted some of her methods. This competency is seen when Rev. Carmen serves as Superintendent of the Church school with the mission to teach, train, nurture and prepare adults and children on God's word for Christian service. She effectively emphasizes the Christian principles which are essential for Christian growth and participation. Continue. *I agree with this assessment; however, I will work to become more knowledgeable about the organized Church school.*

Counselor – Rev. Carmen is skilled in relating and communicating; however, she should consider developing her skills in Christian Counseling. Continue/Develop. Candidate can develop and become an excellent counselor with one-on-one counseling situations. She understands, encourages and is empathetic. This competency is shown by the growth of the emotional support group at my church since its inception. Its great success indicates the effectiveness of her counseling as she continues to pursue further knowledge in counseling. Continue and Develop. *I will develop my skills as a pastoral care minister by auditing courses on "Christian Counseling". This course focuses on the person as a leader in order to nurture personal excellence and spiritual growth. This course is given by New York Divinity School – at Antioch Baptist Church, Brooklyn. (I hold a two year certificate from Blanton-Peale in Pastoral Care.)*

Spiritual Leader – Rev. Carmen should develop further in regular or daily spiritual discipline appropriate to her own tradition. Develop “I was at a funeral for the family member of a church member who is now herself deceased. The candidate was to officiate. The church member was distraught and filled with anxiety. As soon as the candidate arrived, she took control of the situation with an assured presence and immediately the church member calmed down and was comforted.” This competency is seen when Reverend Carmen shows her dedication to strengthening the community’s relationship with God, through workshops that include churches of other denominations. .

Continue. *I agree with the assessment.*

Ecumenist – Rev. Carmen can benefit from increased willingness to learn from other traditions and be challenged by other traditions of faith. I have not observed the Candidate functioning in this competency enough to provide an example. This competency is seen when Rev. Carmen has welcomed speakers of other religious backgrounds to speak on relevant issues that affected the community. Develop. *I agree with this assessment and will explore ways to increase my knowledge of different traditions of faith.*

Witness or Evangelist – Rev. Carmen gladly welcomes or invites others into the community of faith in ways that are appropriate to the particular tradition. Continue. I have not observed the Candidate functioning in this competency enough to provide an example. This competency is seen through the willingness that Rev. Carmen has to preach the gospel in an energetic and spirit-filled manner whenever the opportunity arises. Continue. *I agree with this assessment.*

Administrator – Rev. Carmen easily clarifies and succinctly defines and analyzes a task or problem. Continue. The candidate is an asset to her congregation and community in this competency. Her work as educator/administrator helped the local church and connection. Continue. *I agree with this assessment and am an experienced educational administrator with skills that are transferable to the organized church; however, I will develop administrative skills in a Faith Based Organization.*

Professional Skills – Rev. Carmen demonstrates skills in written communication and is able to express herself well in written work and is a good listener and communicator. Rev. Carmen’s competency in this area is confirmed by the love, affection and respect given by the Congregation and community at large. Continue.

Competencies Chosen for Development

As COUNSELOR: “The model or theory one chooses to guide one’s pastoral counseling, it is imperative that the minister is capable of establishing creative relationships that can help others become more whole. Fundamentally, the pastoral counselor should be molded in the tradition of shepherding with an accent on four functions: healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling. In doing so, she has the privilege of walking with others on their inner journey toward wholeness.”

Strategies:

- I will engage in a study of relevant literature and course work concerning Pastoral Counseling
- I will consult with Dr. Nancy Fields, New York Theological Seminary as to the relevant course that would be appropriate to satisfactorily develop this competency

Evaluation:

- Feedback from course work confirming satisfactory completion of course.
- I will create an introductory questionnaire concerning conducting an initial interview in Pastoral Counseling

As ADMINISTRATOR: “An administrator is able to define and analyze a task or problem succinctly and clearly, establish concrete and realistic goals, develop strategies which flow out of these goals and initiate a clear process of evaluation. She communicates a sense of mission which sees each task as part of the whole life of the congregation and establishes a collegial environment in which the gifts of others are expressed. Through it all there is precision, accuracy, organization and purpose. One

believes that time is well spent, that efforts are not duplicated, and that efficiency is balanced against other competing factors.”

Strategies:

- I will identify and analyze the task on creating a pastoral care ministry that will suit the needs of the Black congregation and the community
- I will get feedback and understanding of the group process and dynamics. I will develop proficiency to work with the group process and individuals to evaluate achievements in order to decide next action steps

Evaluation: Creation of a pastoral care ministry that can address the needs of a congregation and community. Provide a document that describes the steps taken to achieve an effective ministry and produce a document entitled, “OurStories” where there are confirmations that the process helped to achieve wellness.

As PREACHER: Using appropriate language and diction and with effective delivery, a preacher presents researched, organized, well-prepared, biblically based and Spirit-filled sermons that are relevant and challenging to the listener’s daily life and discipleship.

Strategies:

- Prepare a three sermon series on healing
- Record the sermon series

Evaluation: Request a written evaluation from Site team members who are present.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TIMELINE

Date	Task/activity	Tools to complete task	Person Responsible
02/2014	Challenge Statement submitted for approval		Candidate, typist and selected faculty
03/2014	Goal 1: Develop awareness; Implementation Strategy 1& 2 Candidate's documentation; Workshop 2 hours Monthly meet with mentor	Questionnaires	Candidate, Site team; congregants and community
4/2014	Goal 2: Recruit & interview individuals to document their stories Strategies 1, 2 & 3 Candidate's documentation; Workshop 2 hours; monthly meet with mentor & site team	Journals; notebooks Physical workplace For Training	Candidate, congregants and community participants;
5/2014	Goal 3: Create a procedure to develop a pastoral care ministry Strategies 1 & 2 Candidate's documentation: Workshop 2 hours Monthly meeting with mentor & site team	Physical workplace for sharing and documentation	Candidate, selected congregants and community
6/2014	Workshop 2 hours; Research question#1 Candidate's documentation; monthly meeting with mentor and site team	Meeting with Librarian	Typist, Candidate

Date	Task/activity	Tools to complete task	Person Responsible
7/2014	Workshop 2 hours Research question #2 Candidate's documentation; monthly meeting with site team and mentor	Meeting with Librarian	Typist, Candidate
8/2014	Workshop 2 hours Research question #3 Candidate's documentation; monthly meeting with mentor and site team	Meeting with Librarian	Participants; candidate; typist
9/2014	Workshop 2 hours; Competency-counselor Candidate's documentation; monthly meeting with site team and mentor	Meeting with mentor	Candidate, Site Team
10/2014	Workshop 2 hours; Competency – Administrator; Candidate's documentation; monthly meeting with mentor and site team	Meeting with mentor Site team	Candidate, Site Team
11/2014	Revision, draft	Meeting with Site Team, mentor	Candidate, Site team
12/2014	Edit, Revision		

APPENDIX B: BUDGET

Date	Tools Necessary to complete task	Description of Expense	Amount of Expense
04/2014	Completed proposal	Typist.	\$250.00
03/2014		Tuition-set aside	\$3000.00
4/2014		\$100 Local travel; gas; parking \$40.00 Supplies	\$140.00
5/2014		\$100.00:Local travel; gas; parking; \$400.00 Typist	\$500.00
6/2014	Workshop: \$20.00	\$40.00 Supplies; \$100.00 Local travel	\$160.00
7/2014	Workshop: \$20.00	\$100.00 Local travel; \$50.00 Supplies; \$400. Typist	\$570.00
8/2014	Workshop: \$20.00	\$100.00 Local travel; \$50.00 supplies; \$400.00 Typist	\$570.00
9/2014	Workshop: \$20.00	\$100.00 Local travel; \$100.00 supplies; \$250.00 Dinner/Site team	\$470.00
10/2014	Misc.	Set aside	\$200.00
11/2014	Misc.	Set aside	\$200.00
12/2014	TBA	Set aside	\$200.00
TOTAL	TBA	Set aside	\$6260.

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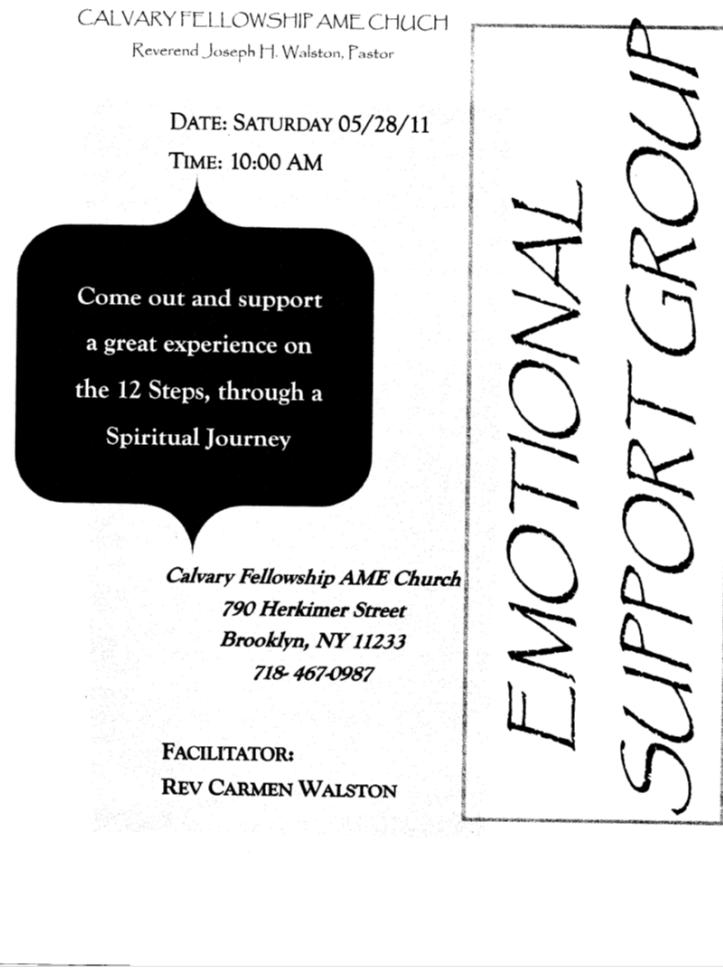
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Appendix B
The Emotional Support Group Flyers

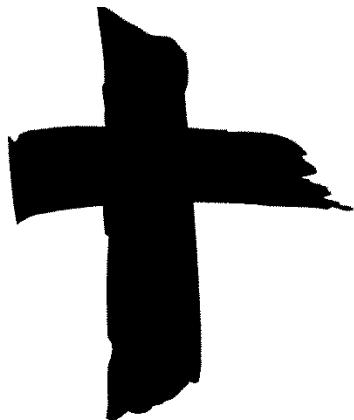


The Emotional Support Journey

So you think that you don't need support for your emotions ?

Prayer for Step Eight

"Dear God, I ask your help in making a list of all those I have harmed. I will take responsibility for my mistakes, and be forgiving to others as you are forgiving to me. Grant me the willingness to begin my restitution. This I pray, ...[insert your name..]"
(If you can name one person who you have harmed, then this session on forgiveness is for you !)



"Step 8 begins the process of healing damaged relationships through our willingness to make amends for past misdeeds. We can let go of our resentments and start to overcome the guilt, shame and low self-esteem we have found through our harmful actions. We can leave behind the gray, angry world of loneliness and move toward a bright future to make things right. Through the gifts of God's work and the Twelve Steps, we have the necessary tools to overcome past wreckage and mend our broken human relationships and develop our spiritual relationship with God."

Time: 10:00 –11:30 am

Light refreshments served
in the Fellowship Hall of

Calvary-Fellowship A.M.E.
Church

Rev. J. H. Walston, Pastor

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

The Emotional Support Group
Meets at

*Calvary-Fellowship A.M.E.
Church
790 Herkimer Street,
Corner of Rochester Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11233*

About this program:

"Our belief is that Scripture and the Twelve Steps are important healing tools. Our intention is to carry the message of the twelve Steps and Christ's love to all hurting people; that healing is possible. To some degree, everyone can experience freedom from the damaging effects of a less-than nurturing environment. As our wounds heal, we become functional members of the community.

Calvary-Fellowship A.M.E. Church

790 Herkimer Street, Brooklyn, New York 11233

"Dedicated to all those who have
Found healing through the
Spiritual Journey of this 12-Step
Program
and who continue to choose to share
their experience, strength and
hope with those yet searching.."

The Serenity Project

Reference

We use: **The Twelve Steps: A Spiritual Journey; A Working Guide for Healing Damaged Emotions; Revised Edition; Based on Biblical Teachings**, c. 1988, 1994, RPI Publishing Inc.

You will want to own a copy of this book to record your inner most feelings and emotional and spiritual progress. The cost of the book is \$15.00 and can be purchased from Amazon.com or any Barnes and Noble Book store. There is no charge to attend the meetings/workshops. However, we are self-supporting from our own contributions. We pass "the hat."

Facilitators:

Rev. Carmen & Sis Pat

Monthly Designated Step Leader

Remaining Meeting Dates for 2014

November 8 & 22, 2014

December 13 & 27, 2014

Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name; thy Kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen

Matthew 6: 9-13

End, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference. Having one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time accepting leadership as a pathway to peace, taking as Jesus did this simple words as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will, so that I may be reasonable traps in this life and supremely happy with You forever. Amen. Reinhold Niebuhr

Suggested Agenda

9:30—9:59 am Meet, Greet and Chat

10:00—10:30 am Step Work

10:31-1-3:30am Self Care & Reflections

The 12 Step Prayer

Step 1—To examine past/present relationships

Step 2—To make amends to those we have hurt

Step 3—To develop a discipline of confession

Step 4—To self-help and self-examine ourselves

Step 5—To develop a discipline of confession

Step 6—To develop inner transformation

Step 7—To develop strength of character

Step 8—To examine past/present relationships

Step 9—To make amends to those we have hurt

Step 10—To maintain spiritual progress

Step 11—To learn to pray & meditate

Step 12—To carry the message

Connected with Us

Calvary-Fellowship A.M.E. Church

Pastor, J.H. Watson, M.Div.

790 Herkimer Street/Corner of Rochester Ave;
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213 (718-467-0987)

Meetings held every 2nd & 4th Saturdays of the month from 9:30 am-11:30 am

Appendix C Resource Guide



PREVENTIVE SERVICES DIRECTORY

Bill de Blasio
Mayor

ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014

Gladys CarrIÓN, Esq.
Commissioner

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QUEENS

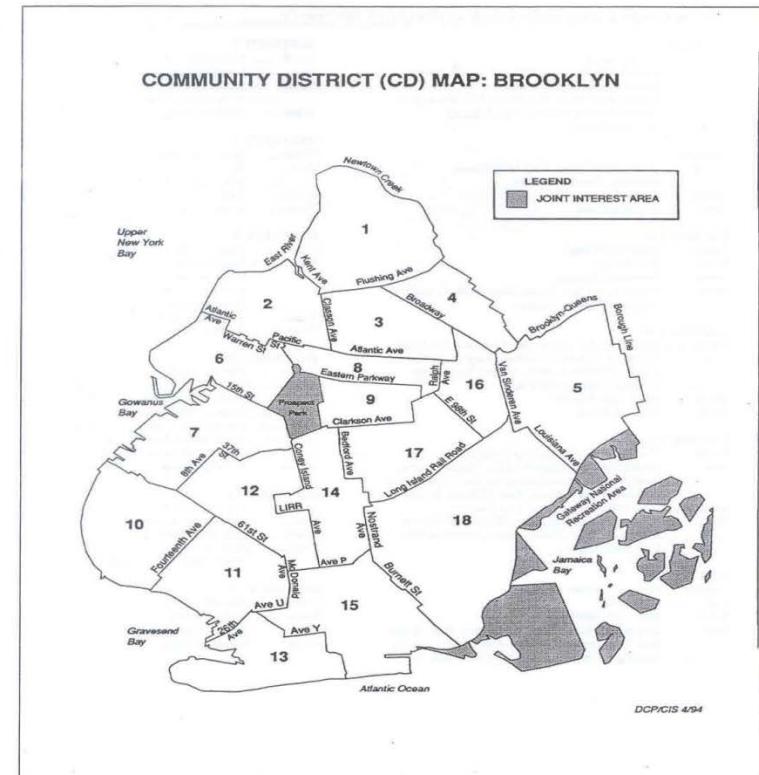
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BROOKLYN PREVENTIVE PROGRAMS



ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014

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ARAB-AMERICAN FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

GENERAL PREVENTIVE - BROOKLYN

Acting Program Director – Yolanda Tart

Yolanda@aafscny.org

150 COURT STREET, 3RD FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201

Phone: (718) 643-8000

Fax: (718) 797-0410

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

CD: 6, 7, 10
GENERAL PREVENTIVE

CAMBA INC. - CHURCH AVENUE MERCHANT'S BLOCK

ASSOCIATION

FAMILIES FOR KIDS

Program Director – Janee Harvey

janeeh@camba.org

521 OCEAN AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11226
Phone: (718) 282-1481
Fax: (718) 693-1538

Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm

CD: 9, 14, 17
BEACON/GENERAL PREVENTIVE

CATHOLIC CHARITIES NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES INC.

BROWNSVILLE FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

Program Director – Daisha Laster

dlaster@ccbq.org

1165 ROCKAWAY AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11236
Phone: (718) 385-2043
Fax: (718) 385-2179

Hours: Monday, Wednesday & Thursday 9:00am – 8:00pm; Tuesday & Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

CD: 5, 16
GENERAL PREVENTIVE

30

ACS – Division of Preventive Services

November 2014

CATHOLIC CHARITIES NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES INC.

EAST NEW YORK FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

Program Director – Yaminah McClendon

ymclendon@ccbq.org

3060 FULTON STREET

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11208

Phone: (929) 234-3032

Fax: (929) 234-3035

Hours: Monday, Thursday & Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm; Tuesday & Wednesday 9:00am – 5:00pm

CD: 12

GENERAL PREVENTIVE

CHINESE-AMERICAN PLANNING COUNCIL

ASIAN FAMILY SERVICES

Program Director – Judy Ah-Yune

jah-yune@cpc-nyc.org

4101 8th AVENUE, 4th FLOOR

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11232

Phone: (212) 941-0030 Ext. 251 or 206

Fax: (212) 226-5351

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

CD: 10, 11

GENERAL PREVENTIVE

COALITION FOR HISPANIC FAMILY SERVICES

GENERAL PREVENTIVE PROGRAM

Program Director – Franc Villalobos

f.villalobos@hispanicfamilyservicesny.org

315 WYCOFF AVENUE, 2nd FLOOR

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11237

Phone: (718) 497-6090 Ext. 388

Fax: (718) 497-9495

Hours: Monday & Tuesday 9:00am – 7:00pm; Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

CD: 4

GENERAL PREVENTIVE

CYPRESS HILLS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEACON FAMILY PLACE

Program Director – Max Howard

maxh@cypresshills.org

350 LINWOOD STREET

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11208

Phone: (718) 277-9593

Fax: (718) 277-5873

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

CD: 5

BEACON/GENERAL PREVENTIVE

EDWIN GOULD SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

UNITED FAMILIES

Program Director – Michelle Netzler

Netzler@egscf.org

151 LAWRENCE STREET, 5th FLOOR

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201

Phone: (347) 227-4160 or (347)227-4161

Fax: (347) 227-4178

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00am – 8:00pm

CD: 3, 8

GENERAL PREVENTIVE

EDWIN GOULD SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

NEW HOPE

Program Director – Sylvia Fety

Sfety@egscf.org

20 NEW YORK AVENUE

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11216

Phone: (347) 464-7140

Fax: (347) 464-7169

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am – 7:00pm

CD: 2

GENERAL PREVENTIVE

GOOD SHEPHERD SERVICES

FAMILY RECEPTION CENTER

Program Director – Rita Sanchez-Torres
Rita_Sanchez-Torres@goodshepherds.org
441 4TH AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11215
Phone: (718) 788-0666 Ext 549
Fax: (718) 965-0365

Hours: Monday – Thursday 9:00am – 8:30pm; Friday 8:30am – 5:00pm

CD: 6, 7
GENERAL PREVENTIVE

GOOD SHEPHERD SERVICES

RED HOOK FAMILY COUNSELING SERVICES

Program Director – Shalini Schaeffer
Shalini_Schaeffer@goodshepherds.org
173 CONOVER STREET
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11231
Phone: (718) 422-1900 Ext 310
Fax: (718) 422-1925

Hours: Monday – Thursday 8:00am – 8:00pm; Friday 8:00am – 6:00pm

CD: 6
BEACON/GENERAL PREVENTIVE

HEARTSHARE ST. VINCENT'S

EAST BROOKLYN FAMILY SERVICES

Program Director – Anthony Georges
Anthony.Georges@heartshare.org
123 LINDEN BLVD
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11226
Phone: (347) 770-8155
Fax: (718) 941-4371

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am – 9:00pm; Saturday 10:00am – 4:00pm

CD: 17, 18
GENERAL PREVENTIVE

**HEARTSHARE ST. VINCENT'S
BENSONHURST FAMILY SERVICES**

Program Director – Sherry Brumel

Sherry.Brumel@Heartshare.org

138 BAY 20TH STREET

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11214

Phone: (718) 234-1717

Fax: (718) 331-1541

Hours: Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday 9:00am – 9:00pm;
Thursday & Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

**CD: 10, 11
GENERAL PREVENTIVE**

HEARTSHARE ST. VINCENT'S

SURFSIDE FAMILY SERVICES BEACON GENERAL PREVENTIVE

Program Director – Marie Semexant

Marie.Semexant@Heartshare.org

2865 WEST 19TH STREET

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11224

Phone: (718) 372-0580

Fax: (718) 372-0634

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am – 8:00pm

**CD: 13
BEACON/GENERAL PREVENTIVE**

JEWISH BOARD OF FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

NEPTUNE FAMILY SERVICES

Program Director – Amira Martin

amartin@jbfcfs.org

3360 SHORE PARKWAY, 2nd FLOOR

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11235

Phone: (718) 769-0405 Ext. 203

Fax: (718) 332-5601

Hours: Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday 9:00am – 8:00pm; Thursday & Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

**CD: 13, 15
GENERAL PREVENTIVE**

34

**ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014**

JEWISH BOARD OF FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SOUTHERN BROOKLYN FAMILY SERVICES

Program Director – Tracy Phillips

tphillips@jbfc.org

2233 NOSTRAND AVENUE, 3RD FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11210

Phone: (718) 258-1714 Ext. 210

Fax: (718) 859-0730

Hours: Monday 9:00am – 9:00pm; Tuesday & Wednesday 9:00am – 8pm;
Thursday 9:00am – 6:00pm; Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

CD: 14, 17

GENERAL PREVENTIVE

MERCYFIRST

THE GERARD C. DURR CENTER

Program Director – Barbara Denize

bdenize@mercyfirst.org

333 AVENUE X
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11223
Phone: (718) 375-7444
Fax: (718) 375-2444

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

CD: 15, 13

GENERAL PREVENTIVE

OHEL CHILDREN'S HOME AND FAMILY SERVICES

PREVENTIVE PROGRAM

Program Director – Shelley Berger

shelley.berger@ohelfamily.org

4510 16TH AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11204
Phone: (718) 851-6300
Fax: (718) 851-1672

Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 9:00am – 7:00pm; Wednesday 9:00am – 5:00pm

CD: 12

GENERAL PREVENTIVE

35

ACS – Division of Preventive Services

November 2014

PUERTO RICAN FAMILY INSTITUTE
BUSHWICK CHILD PLACEMENT PREVENTION PROGRAM
Program Director – Marioli Sterling
Marioli.Sterling@dfa.state.ny.us
358 GROVE STREET, 1ST FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11237
Phone: (718) 387-5200, Ext. 2121
Fax: (718) 387-5250
Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am – 6:00pm

CD: 4
GENERAL PREVENTIVE

PUERTO RICAN FAMILY INSTITUTE
WILLIAMSBURG CHILD PLACEMENT AND PREVENTION PROGRAM
Program Director – Irma Rodriguez
Irodriguez@prfi.org
785 FLUSHING AVENUE – 5TH FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11206
Phone: (718) 782-7701
Fax: (718) 782-7545
Hours: Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm;
Tuesday & Thursday 9:00am – 7:00pm; Saturday 10:00am – 1:00pm

CD: 1
GENERAL PREVENTIVE

PUERTO RICAN FAMILY INSTITUTE
EAST NEW YORK CHILD PLACEMENT PREVENTION PROGRAM
Program Director – Portia Robinson
probinson@prfi.org
2924 FULTON STREET, 1ST FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11207
Phone: (718) 647-7520
Fax: (718) 647-2485
Hours: Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm; Tuesday & Thursday 9:00am – 6:30pm

CD: 5
GENERAL PREVENTIVE

36

ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014

SCO FAMILY OF SERVICES
CENTER FOR FAMILY LIFE

Program Director – Julia Jean Francois
jifrancois@cfslsp.org
345 43rd STREET
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11232
Phone: (718) 788-3500
Fax: (718) 788-2275

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00am – 10:00pm; Saturday 9:00am – 5:00pm;
Saturday (**during the summer**) 9:00am – 3:00pm

CD: 7, 12
BEACON/GENERAL PREVENTIVE

SCO FAMILY OF SERVICES
BROWNSVILLE SUPPORT CENTER

Program Director – Elizabeth Rodriguez
erodriguez2@sco.org
444 THOMAS BOYLAND STREET
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11212
Phone: (718) 342-4254
Fax: (718) 495-7205

Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

CD: 16
GENERAL PREVENTIVE

SCO FAMILY OF SERVICES
FAMILY DYNAMICS

Program Director – Elizabeth Rodriguez
erodriguez2@sco.org
1420 BUSHWICK AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11207
Phone: (718) 455-2300
Fax: (718) 455-1045

Hours: Monday 12:00noon – 8:00pm; Tuesday – Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm

CD: 4
GENERAL PREVENTIVE

37

ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014

SCO FAMILY OF SERVICES

FAMILY DYNAMICS CENTER I

Program Director – Karen Joseph

kjoseph2@sco.org

1360 FULTON STREET, 3RD FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11216

Phone: (917) 966-4610 Ext. 4634

Fax: (718) 919-2017

Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday 9:00am – 5:00pm;
Tuesday & Thursday 9:00am – 8:00pm

CD: 3, 4
GENERAL PREVENTIVE

SCO FAMILY OF SERVICES

FAMILY DYNAMICS CENTER II

Program Director – Karen Joseph

kjoseph2@sco.org

1360 FULTON STREET, 3RD FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11216

Phone: (917) 966-4610 Ext. 4634

Fax: (718) 602-3666

Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday 9:00am – 5:00pm;
Wednesday 12:00noon – 8:00pm

CD: 3
GENERAL PREVENTIVE

SEAMEN'S SOCIETY FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

BROWNSVILLE PROGRAM

Program Director – Roland Sombai

roland.sombai@dfa.state.ny.us

1668 PITKIN AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11212

Phone: (888) 837-6687

Fax: (718) 720-2321

Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am – 4:45pm

CD: 5,16
GENERAL PREVENTIVE

38

ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014

SESAME FLYERS INTERNATIONAL INC.

WINTHROP BEACON CENTER – I.S. 232

Program Director – Leslyn Rahaman

lrahman@sesameflyers.org

905 WINTHROP STREET

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11203

Phone: (718) 221-8881 Ext. 2110 or 2120

Fax: (718) 493-7163

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am – 9:00pm; Saturday by appointments

CD: 9, 17

BEACON/GENERAL PREVENTIVE

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**ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014**

**BROOKLYN
FAMILY TREATMENT REHABILITATION
(FTR)**

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY SERVICES

BEDFORD-STUYVESANT FAMILY CENTER

Program Director – Jody Querbach

jquerbach@wearebcs.org

20 NEW YORK AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11216

Phone: (718) 622-9400

Fax: (718) 398-7139

Hours: Monday, Tuesday & Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm;
Wednesday & Thursday 9:00am – 6:00pm; on call 24 hours/7 days a week

**CD: 2, 3, 5, 8
FTR**

COALITION FOR HISPANIC FAMILY SERVICES

FAMILY TREATMENT REHABILITATION

Program Director – Franc Villalobos

fvillalobos@hispanicfamilyservicesny.org

315 WYCOFF AVENUE, 5TH FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11237

Phone: (718) 497-6090

Fax: (718) 497-9495

Hours: Monday & Tuesday 9:00am – 7:00pm; Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

**CD: 4
FTR**

40

**ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014**

COMMUNITY COUNSELING AND MEDIATION

FIRST STEP I

Program Director – Lana Cherry

lcherry@ccmnyc.org

810 CLASSON AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11238

Phone: (718) 398-1144

Fax: (718) 398-1576

Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm, Tuesday, Thursdays 9:00am – 7:00pm
Saturday 10:00am – 4:00pm

**CD: 9
FTR**

COMMUNITY COUNSELING AND MEDIATION

FIRST STEP II

Program Director – Lana Cherry

lcherry@ccmnyc.org

123 LINDEN BLVD., SUITE 200
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11226

Phone: (718) 693-7700

Fax: (718) 693-0120

Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm; Saturday 10:00am – 4:00pm

**CD: 15, 17, 18
FTR**

GOOD SHEPHERD SERVICES

TRANSITIONS FTR

Program Director – Miseon Kang

Miseon.Kang@goodshepherds.org

503 5TH AVENUE, 4TH FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11215

Phone: (718) 965-3313

Fax: (718) 965-4102

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm; Late Evening hours as needed.

**CD: 6, 7, 10
FTR**

41

**ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014**

GRAHAM WINDHAM, INC.

NEIGHBORHOOD FAMILY CENTER – BROOKLYN

Program Director - Laurie Sands

sandsl@graham-windham.org

540 ATLANTIC AVE

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11217

Phone: (718) 875-1167 Ext. 208

Fax: (347) 381-1054

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:30am – 7:00pm

CD: 3, 8, 9

FTR

JEWISH CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK (JCCA)

HELPING HANDS FOR FAMILIES

Program Director – Diane Singleton

singletond@jccany.org

858 EAST 29TH STREET

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11210

Phone: (718) 859-4500

Fax: (718) 859-4013

Hours: Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9:00am – 8:00pm; Wednesday 9:00am – 7:00pm;
Friday 9:00am – 6:00pm

CD: 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18

FTR

SCO FAMILY OF SERVICES

FAMILY DYNAMICS

Program Director – Cavit Mehmet Zendut

cmzendut@sco.org

1360 FULTON STREET, 3RD FLOOR

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11216

Phone: (917) 966-4620 Ext. 4633

Fax: (718) 919-2017

Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday 9:00am – 5:00pm;
Tuesday & Thursday 9:00am – 8:00pm

CD: 3, 4

FTR

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ACS – Division of Preventive Services

November 2014

SEAMEN'S SOCIETY FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, INC.

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY OFFICE

Program Director – Roland Sombai

roland.sombai@dfa.state.ny.us

1668 PITKIN AVENUE

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11212

Phone: (888) 837-6687

Fax: (718) 720-2321

Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am – 4:45pm

CD: 8

FTR

WOMEN'S PRISON ASSOCIATION

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY OFFICE

Program Director – Tabitha Gronock

tgronock@wpaonline.org

2632 ATLANTIC AVE

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11207

Phone: (347) 227-4232

Fax: (718) 385-2795

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00am – 6:00pm

CD: 5, 16

FTR

**BROOKLYN
EVIDENCE BASED PROGRAMS
FFT-CW**

COMMUNITY COUNSELING AND MEDIATION
I-CAP INTENSIVE CHILDREN AND PARENTS PROGRAM - FFT- CW

Program Director – Lana Cherry

lcherry@ccmnyc.org

810 CLASSON AVE.

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11238

Phone: (718) 230-5100

Fax: (718) 230-5425

Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am - 9:00pm; Saturday 9:00am - 5:00pm

CD: 8, 9

FFT-CW

NEW YORK FOUNDLING

NYF STEPS-S BROOKLYN

Acting Assistant Vice President – Alaine Robertson-Ali

Alaine.Robertson-Ali@NYFoundling.org

180 LIVINGSTON STREET, SUITE 304

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201

Phone: (646) 385-4500

Fax: (718) 237-9726

Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm

CD: 14, 17

FFT-CW

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ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014

BROOKLYN BRIEF STRATEGIC FAMILY THERAPY

JEWISH CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION - CAPS

Program Director – Robert Cizma

cizmar@jccany.org

858 EAST 29th STREET
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11210

Phone: (718) 859-4500

Fax: (718) 859-4013

Hours: Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9:00am - 8:00pm; Wednesday & Friday 9:00am - 6:00pm
Saturday 9:00am - 5:00pm

CD: 12, 13, 15, 17, 18
BSF

45

ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014

BROOKLYN CHILD PARENT PSYCHOTHERAPY

JEWISH CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION - PACT

Program Director – Robert Cizma

cizmar@jccany.org

858 EAST 29th STREET
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11210
Phone: (718) 859-4500
Fax: (718) 859-4013
Hours: Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9:00am - 8:00pm; Wednesday & Friday 9:00am - 6:00pm
Saturday 9:00am - 5:00pm

CD: 12, 13, 15, 17, 18
CPP

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ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014

BROOKLYN FAMILY CONNECTIONS (FC)

THE FAMILY CENTER
FAMILY NET/FAMILY CONNECTION
Program Director – Kandrea Higgins
khiggins@thefamilycenter.org
493 NOSTRAND AVE. 3rd, FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11216
Phone: (718) 230-1379 Ext. 110
Fax: (718) 638-1628
Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm

CD: 3
FC

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ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014

BROOKLYN PROMISING PRACTICE MODEL

BOYS TOWN NEW YORK, INC.
BOYS TOWN IN HOME FAMILY SERVICES

Program Director – Jasmin Singleton

Jasmin.Singleton@boystown.org

1368 FULTON STREET, SUITE 511
BUILDING B/STARK BUILDING
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11216

Phone: (718) 230-3947

Fax: (718) 636-2233

Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm; on call 24 hours/7 days a week

CD: 3, 8
PPM

48

ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014

BROOKLYN SAFE CARE

**CAMBA, INC. - CHURCH AVENUE MERCHANT'S BLOCK
ASSOCIATION**

SAFE CARE FAMILY SERVICES

Program Director – Janee Harvey

janeeh@camba.org

885 FLATBUSH AVE.

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11226

Phone: (718) 282-5575

Fax: (718) 282-5997

Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm

**CD: 9, 14, 17
SC**

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**ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014**

BROOKLYN STRUCTURAL FAMILY THERAPY

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY SERVICES

STRUCTURAL FAMILY THERAPY PROGRAM-BEDFORD STUYVESANT FAMILY CENTER

Program Director – Jodi Querbach

jquerbach@wearebcs.org

20 NEW YORK AVENUE, 2nd FLOOR

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11216

Phone: (718) 622-9400

Fax: (718) 398-7139

Hours: Monday & Tuesday 9:00am - 8:00pm; Wednesday & Thursday 9:00am - 6:00pm;
Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm

**CD: 2, 3
SFT**

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY SERVICES

STRUCTURAL FAMILY THERAPY PROGRAM – EAST NEW YORK FAMILY CENTER

Program Director – Jodi Querbach

jquerbach@wearebcs.org

400 LIBERTY AVE.

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11207

Phone: (718) 345-6300

Fax: (718) 398-7139

Hours: Monday & Tuesday 8:30am - 6:00pm; Wednesday & Thursday 8:30am - 8:00pm;
Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm

**CD: 5, 16
SFT**

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**ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014**

BOROWIDE SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS

PROGRAMS PROVIDING SERVICES TO FAMILIES WITH SPECIAL MEDICAL AND/OR MR/DD NEEDS

HEARTSHARE ST. VINCENT'S SPECIALIZED PREVENTIVE

Program Director – Maria Pena
Phone: (718) 422-4258 or (917) 960-6105
Clinical Supervisor - Mary Caligire
Phone: (718) 422-4200
66 BOERUM PLACE, 4th FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201
Fax: (718) 422-2410

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

**Serves: Brooklyn and Queens
SPECIAL MEDICAL**

SCO FAMILY OF SERVICES

SPECIAL MEDICAL & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES PREVENTIVE SERVICES

Program Director – Gerardine Cadet-Mareus
gcmareus@sco.org
444 THOMAS BOYLAND STREET, ROOM 309
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11212
Phone: (718) 342-2374 ext. 302
Fax: (718) 342-2629

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

**Serves: Brooklyn
SPECIAL MEDICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL**

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ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014

CITYWIDE SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS

**PROGRAMS PROVIDING SERVICES FOR THE MEDICALLY
FRAGILE, DEAF/HEARING IMPAIRED, SEXUALLY EXPLOITED AND
RESPITE SERVICES**

NEW YORK FOUNDLING

FAMILY SERVICES FOR DEAF CHILDREN AND ADULTS

Program Director – Jose Vasquez

jose.vasquez@NYFoundling.org

590 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS – 8TH FLOOR

NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10011

Phone: (212) 206-4111 or (212) 886-4095

Fax: (212) 886-4081

Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am – 8:00pm

**Serves: Citywide
MEDICALLY FRAGILE**

NEW YORK FOUNDLING HOSPITAL

CRISIS NURSERY/RESPITE

Program Director – Fanny Duran

fanny.duran@NYFoundling.org

590 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS

NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10011

Phone: (212) 886-4000

Fax: (212) 886-4081

Hours: Help Line – 24 hours/7 days a week

**Serves: Citywide
RESPITE SERVICES**

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**ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014**

ST. LUKE'S-ROOSEVELT HOSPITAL

NEW BEGINNINGS PROGRAM

Executive Director – Barbara Rothbart

brothbar@chpnet.org

1111 AMSTERDAM AVENUE, SCRYSER 7
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10025

Phone: (212) 523-2685

Fax: (212) 523-3206

Hours: Monday 8:00am – 5:00pm;
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 8:30am – 5:00pm

**Serves: Citywide
SEXUALLY EXPLOITED**

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**ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014**

BROOKLYN INTENSIVE FAMILY PREVENTIVE SERVICES

JEWISH CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION FUNCTIONAL FAMILY THERAPY - FFT BROOKLYN

Program Director - Diane Singleton

singletond@jccany.org

858 EAST 29th STREET

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11210

Phone: (718) 859-4500 or (347) 293-4195

Fax: (718) 859-4013

Hours: Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9:00am - 8:00pm; Wednesday 9:00am 7:00pm;
Friday 9:00am-6:00pm

**Serves: Brooklyn
INTENSIVE FAMILY PREVENTIVE SERVICES**

NEW YORK FOUNDLING

FFT-CW PARTNERS FOR CHANGE – BROOKLYN

Program Director – Francesca Sciscenti

Francesca.Sciscenti@nyfoundling.org

180 LIVINGSTON STREET, 3rd FLOOR

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201

Phone: (646) 745-7164

Fax: (212) 660-1344

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm

**Serves: Brooklyn
INTENSIVE FAMILY PREVENTIVE SERVICES**

**BROOKLYN
FAMILY AND YOUTH INTERVENTION
PROGRAMS – FAP**

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY

BROOKLYN FAMILY STABILIZATION (FAP) - Level I

Program Director – Kim Dorsey

kimd@childrensaidsociety.org

175 REMSEN STREET, 7TH FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201

Phone: (718) 625-8300

Fax: (718) 858-8234

Hours: Monday & Friday 9:00am – 5:30pm;
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 9:00am – 7:00pm

**CD: 2, 6
FAP**

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY

BROOKLYN FYI FUNCTIONAL FAMILY THERAPY PROGRAM - Level II

Program Director – Kim Dorsey

kimd@childrensaidsociety.org

175 REMSEN STREET, 7TH FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201

Phone: (718) 625-8300

Fax: (718) 858-8234

Hours: Monday & Friday 9:00am – 5:30pm;
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9:00am – 7:00pm

**CD: 2, 6
FAP**

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ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY

BROOKLYN FYI / MULTIDIMENSIONAL FAMILY THERAPY- Level III

Program Director – Kim Dorsey

kimd@childrensaidsociety.org

175 REMSEN STREET, 7TH FLOOR

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201

Phone: (718) 625-8300

Fax: (718) 858-8234

Hours: Monday & Friday 9:00am – 5:30pm;

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 9:00am – 7:00pm

**CD: 2, 6
FAP**

NEW YORK FOUNDLING

K.E.Y.S. VINCENT J. FONTANA CENTER

Program Director – Latasha Fermin

Latasha.Fermin@NYFoundling.org

590 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS

NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10014

Phone: (646) 430-1188

Fax: (212) 660-1344

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

**Serves: Citywide
FAP**

**BROOKLYN
JUVENILE JUSTICE INITIATIVE (JJI)**

**ALTERNATIVE TO PLACEMENT (ATP) AND INTENSIVE
PREVENTIVE AFTERCARE SERVICES (IPAS)**

CATHOLIC GUARDIAN SERVICES
INTENSIVE PREVENTIVE AND AFTERCARE SERVICES

Program Director – Curtis Still

cstill@dfa.state.ny.us

1780 GRAND CONCOURSE

BRONX, NEW YORK 10457

Phone: (718) 228-1515 Ext. 172

Fax: (718) 299-7927

Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am - 6:00pm; Every 2nd Saturday 10:00am - 4:00pm

Serves: Citywide
JJI/INTENSIVE PREVENTIVE AND AFTERCARE SERVICES

LITTLE FLOWER CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

ALTERNATIVE TO PLACEMENT

Program Director – Kristen Marzo, marzok@lfchild.org

Program Contact – Bridgit Lumley, lumlevb@lfchild.org

44 COURT STREET, 5TH FLOOR

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201

Phone: (347) 533-3637, (718) 935-1791 Ext. 4201 or 4208

Fax: (718) 260-8255

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am-5:00pm

Serves Brooklyn
JJI/ALTERNATIVE TO PLACEMENT

SCO FAMILY OF SERVICES

ALTERNATIVE TO PLACEMENT

Program Director – Angela Watson

a Watson@ sco.org

57 WILLOUGHBY STREET, 5TH FLOOR

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201

Phone: (718) 596-1116 Ext. 11

Fax: (718) 772-0289

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00am - 6:00pm

Serves Brooklyn

JJI/ALTERNATIVE TO PLACEMENT

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ACS – Division of Preventive Services

November 2014

BROOKLYN SPECIALIZED TEEN PREVENTIVE SERVICES

JEWISH BOARD OF FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

BROOKLYN MST-SA

Program Director- Tracy Phillips

tphillips@jbfc.org

2333 NOSTRAND AVE. 3rd FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11210

Phone: (718) 258-1714 Ext. 210

Fax: (718) 859- 0730

Hours: Monday 9:00am - 9:00pm; Tuesday 9:00am - 8:00pm;
Wednesday 9:00am - 7:00pm; Thursday 9:00am - 6:00pm; Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm

Serves: Brooklyn

SPECIALIZED TEEN PREVENTIVE SERVICES

JEWISH CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION

JCCA BRIEF STRATEGIC FAMILY THERAPY

Program Director- Diane Singleton

singletond@jccany.org

858 EAST 29th STREET
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11210
Phone: (718) 859-4500 Ext. 4553
Fax: (718) 859-4013

Hours: Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9:00am - 8:00pm; Wednesday 9:00am - 8:00pm;
Friday 9:00am - 6:00pm

Serves: Brooklyn

SPECIALIZED TEEN PREVENTIVE SERVICES

NEW YORK FOUNDLING HOSPITAL

FAMILIES ALIGNED TO STAY TOGETHER MST-CAN- BROOKLYN

Program Director – Rebecca Fein

Rebecca.fein@nyfoundling.org

180 LIVINGSTON STREET
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201
Phone: (646) 315-2911
Fax: (212) 660-1327

Hours: On call 24 hours/ 7 days a week

Serves: Brooklyn

SPECIALIZED TEEN PREVENTIVE SERVICES

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ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014

BROOKLYN NSP AFTERCARE PREVENTIVE PROGRAMS

BOYSTOWN

BOYSTOWN NSP AFTER CARE SERVICES

Program Director – Jasmine Singleton

Jasmine.Singleton@boystown.org

525 DEAN STREET, 4th FLOOR

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11217

Phone: (718) 636-0496 or (718) 230-3947

Fax: (718) 636-2233

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00am - 6:00pm

**CD: Citywide
CLOSE TO HOME**

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY

NSP-AFTERCARE SERVICES BROOKLYN

Acting Program Director - Kerry Moles

Kerry.Moles@childrensaidsociety.org

175 REMSEN STREET, 7th FLOOR

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201

Phone: (212) 503-6837

Fax: (212) 972-7790

Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm

**CD: Brooklyn and Queens
CLOSE TO HOME**

CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

FFT-NSP AFTERCARE – SED, SA, & FIRE SETTING

Program Director - Richard Larson

r.larson@childrensvillage.org

400 EAST FORDHAM ROAD, 6th FLOOR

BRONX, NEW YORK 10458

Phone: (718) 693-0600 Ext. 6201

Fax: (914) 517-8256

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm

**CD: Citywide
CLOSE TO HOME**

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**ACS – Division of Preventive Services
November 2014**

CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

FFT-NSP AFTERCARE – PSB

Program Director - Richard Larson

rlarson@childrensvillage.org

400 EAST FORDHAM ROAD, 6th FLOOR

BRONX, NEW YORK 10458

Phone: (718) 693-0600 Ext. 6201

Fax: (914) 517-8256

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm

**CD: Citywide
CLOSE TO HOME**

NEW ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN

MOVING FORWARD – NSP AFTERCARE PROGRAM

Special Medical Needs, Mental Retardation, Developmental Disabilities

Program Director - Stephanie McGill

Stephanie.mcgill@newalternativesforchildren.org

37 WEST 26th STREET

NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10010

Phone: (212) 696-1550

Fax: (212) 696-1602

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am - 8:00pm; Saturday 9:00am - 5:00pm

**CD: Citywide
CLOSE TO HOME**

Bibliography

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_____. *African American Pastoral Care*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991.

_____. *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994.

_____. *Recalling Our Own Stories: Spiritual Renewal for Religious Caregivers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.